

# THE STUDENT WORLD

A quarterly magazine published at 13 Rue Calvin, Geneva  
by the World's Student Christian Federation

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VOLUME L

Fourth Quarter, 1957

NUMBER 4

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## The Life and Mission of the Church

In reporting on the decisions of our Executive Committee in *The Student World*<sup>1</sup>, I mentioned that we had in principle decided to undertake in the coming years a major project on the mission of the Church. As I said: "While we are... in theory concerned with the mission of the Church, as a matter of fact Student Christian Movements produce remarkably few men and women willing and prepared to devote their lives or part of them to active service in the missionary enterprise of the Church... A very large majority of our members are simply unaware of the reason why the Church is bound to be missionary, and are completely uninformed about the scope and character of the present missionary enterprise." That is why our General Committee approved in principle a plan for a series of meetings focussed on our responsibility within the total mission of the Church.

The Executive Committee of the Federation met in April at the Ecumenical Institute in Switzerland and devoted a large part of its session to a careful consideration of this plan, studying its feasibility and looking in detail at its constituent parts. In order to make this work more fruitful, a number of experts from ecumenical organizations, churches, and missionary societies had been invited, and their advice was most valuable. The decision has now been made, and I think I can say that it was made with great seriousness. As will become

<sup>1</sup> First quarter, 1957.



apparent in this brief description, the project is of a scope which might seem unrealistic in relation to the resources of the Federation. It is obvious that in the coming years, at all levels in the Federation and Student Christian Movements, we shall need to concentrate our energies on it at the expense of many other activities which in themselves are certainly valuable. It is also clear that it is rather difficult for a student organization to assume responsibility for a program of study and training which deals with the whole life and mission of the Church. It is not surprising, therefore, that at the beginning of our Executive Committee meeting several of us felt hesitant, and wondered whether we should not leave this responsibility to some such body as the International Missionary Council or the World Council of Churches, or whether we should propose that the project be undertaken on a cooperative basis by all ecumenical bodies. However, it was in response to the urgent plea of ecumenical, church, and missionary leaders that the Executive Committee decided to assume the full responsibility for this large task. During recent months a number of these leaders have been consulted personally, and I have been profoundly moved by the fact that all of them emphasized strongly that the project came at a most crucial moment in church history, that it might render a valuable service to the whole Church of Christ, and that in undertaking it the Federation could count on the support of the Christian community throughout the world. The Executive Committee took the decision with a certain degree of apprehension, and it was made clear that we were accepting this new responsibility and facing the considerable financial difficulties involved in this task of thinking and organization because we had no other way to remain faithful to God's demands, and that we did so in the certainty that in carrying out this task we may count on his strength and guidance.

#### *The need for radical re-examination*

Now I want to give a description of the content of the undertaking. I think it is possible to describe both our concern and the intention of the project in three words : study, challenge, and training.



As stressed at our General Committee in 1956, and I think all Christian leaders today would agree, the Church and particularly its missionary enterprise have been hampered by theological uncertainty about the very foundations and purposes of the life and mission of the Church. All those involved at the present time in student Christian work are aware that the present apathy or disinterest of students with regard to the various aspects of the life and mission of the Church is due to their inability to grasp the simple biblical truth about the Church and its mission. It is irrelevant at this point to blame anyone, and most probably the blame must be shared by almost everyone. Whether the churches have been unable to interpret to the younger generation in understandable terms the calling which God makes to his Church, whether students have refused to listen to the churches, or whether, which is most probable, the whole Church at the present time is unable to think out its mission in terms both true to the biblical revelation and relevant to the modern world, the fact remains that students, and indeed a very large part of the membership of the Church, are simply unaware of the meaning and urgency of mission, and as a result of this uncertainty are likely to experience serious misgivings about the whole life of the Church in the world. In this respect it does not matter that some who hold a more "catholic" point of view make mission, so to speak, an implication of the Church conceived more as a worshipping community — see the article of David Jenkins in this number — while others equate the reality of the Church with its mission to the world. All would agree that a church which ceases to be missionary ceases to be the Church of Christ.

It is for that reason, I think, that we decided to widen the scope of the plan first outlined by the General Committee to include not only the mission of the Church, but both its life and mission. Practically speaking, it seemed impossible to deal with missionary activities without facing at every point problems of community life in the Church, of worship, of ethics, both personal and social, of culture, of church structure and ministry. In a sense the consideration of a possible program for this effort of study led us to think that what was needed



now was a basic rethinking of the total responsibility of the Church. When we are faced with such fundamental uncertainty, we have to go back to the roots, we have to undertake a radical re-examination in the full meaning of that word.

At this point in our thinking we faced a difficult question. In the light of this widespread uncertainty, is there any possibility for an ecumenical body like the Federation to teach as well as to study? Is there any body of knowledge, of doctrine, which can be used as a basis on which that re-examination can begin? We were much helped by a brief improvised description by Dr. Visser 't Hooft, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, of what he called "the present consensus in the churches about the Church". This statement is reproduced in this number, although Dr. Visser 't Hooft himself warned us of its incompleteness and provisional character.

### *The need for teaching*

I have just said that our purpose is not only to study but also to teach. For a long time there has been a trend in the Christian world, especially in ecumenical gatherings, to emphasize the value of bringing Christians together for mutual confrontation, in the quite valid belief that out of this confrontation the ecumenical discovery of the unity of the Church would grow and help in a new understanding of our obedience. Our Executive Committee decided that for once we should break from this trend, and while going ahead with ecumenical confrontation, we should strongly emphasize the need for straight teaching, by those leaders of the Church who have acquired through their work, study, and experience particularly valuable knowledge on the life and mission of the Church. Our project will involve, therefore, both in the preparatory stages through the publication of various papers, and in the various meetings being planned, turning to these experts. Use will be made of experts in theology who will be asked to teach us about the biblical foundations of the Church and the lessons to be learned from its history, and particularly about the missionary and ecumenical movements. Use will also be made of what we might call practical experts, who have gained personal

experience of new, imaginative efforts of the Church to face the changing situation of society, politics, culture, and religious life. A strong effort will be made both to proceed with a severe critical evaluation of our churches and ourselves, and also to give special attention to the new ways in which the Church of Christ is trying today to fulfil its missionary responsibility.

### *The need for commitment*

However, study and teaching would be insufficient in themselves. No Christian can undertake an intellectual effort which does not lead him to commitment. Part of the intent of the project will, therefore, be to challenge students to assume active responsibility in the life and mission of the Church during the time of their studies, and especially afterwards, and also to give them guidance and preparation in accepting such responsibility. But our purpose is not to put the job of thinking on a few experts, leaving it to students simply to implement the results of this thinking. We have conceived the project as a whole, and just as we do not wish students to be satisfied with an interesting inquiry, so we do not wish to call them simply to an enthusiastic dedication which does not grow out of a new understanding rooted in the truth of Jesus Christ. Without that understanding, it would be likely that, after the first enthusiasm, if it were aroused at all, they would fall back into disinterest or discouragement, or at the least confusion about what to do.

How are we to proceed? It may be that we have not been very imaginative at this point. Once again we have thought in terms of several meetings, prepared for by serious work on publications and study, and followed not only by study but also by action.

I shall not describe here in detail the various elements of the project. This will be done in the next issue of *Federation News*, especially prepared by the Federation Officers as an official description of the project. I shall only mention the major elements foreseen, with a brief description of each.



*The teaching conference*

The central element of the project will be a teaching conference of a world character, to be held in July 1960 in Great Britain. This conference, the theme of which will be "Christ's Ministry in the World and Our Calling", will bring together about five hundred participants, three hundred and fifty chosen by SCMs, and one hundred non-student participants selected by other ecumenical organizations from among their younger leadership. In addition, there will be fifty leaders from all parts of the Church to serve as teachers, tutors, and advisers. The field of teaching of this conference will be very broad, covering the study of the biblical doctrine of the life and mission of the Church; of the crucial periods in the history of the Church during which it has rethought its life and mission, with special emphasis on the last decades of missionary and ecumenical rediscovery; and the study of ways in which the Church could and should fulfil its mission in the midst of rapidly changing social situations, in the midst of new religious developments, both in the ancient religions of Asia and the new secular religions of the Western world, and in the midst of the great intellectual confusion which marks our present world, and especially its universities. As I have already said, particular attention will be given to what one might call new pioneering experiments of the Church in all these fields. While a large part of the two weeks of this teaching conference will be devoted to courses given by prominent leaders, some of the most valuable work will be done in tutorial groups of twenty to twenty-five. These small groups will try day after day to digest and assimilate the content of the teaching received and to work it out in terms of personal obedience. In addition, some specialized commissions will look at various aspects of the life and mission of the Church which are not dealt with directly in the main lectures. Finally, strong emphasis will be put on the importance of personal reading, and the library will have an important place in the conference set-up.

One might ask why England has been chosen as the site of this large meeting. Is it not dangerous, after more than a

century during which the missionary enterprise of the Church has been confused with the political and commercial domination of the West, to hold such a meeting in a Western European country? At this point there is no other answer than that of expediency. To hold such a meeting in Asia, Africa, or Latin America would probably have been financially impractical, and would have considerably increased the difficulty of recruiting speakers and leaders. Representatives from these "younger churches" were unanimous in approving this decision.

### *Regional meetings*

However, it was partly for this reason that it was decided that the 1960 conference should be preceded not only by work of documentation and publication organized by the Federation staff, but also by a sort of pilot conference somewhat along the same lines, to be held at the end of 1958 in Asia, to look explicitly at the problems of the life and mission of the Church in Asian countries. This will greatly help to make the 1960 meeting more fruitful, and also avoid a Western slant which the project might otherwise have.

Finally, the 1960 conference should be looked at in the perspective of what will follow it. A series of regional meetings in all parts of the world is planned for subsequent years. We have not yet decided how many such conferences should be held, whether, for instance, there should be only one for the whole of Africa or Latin America, or several. We shall be guided here also by practical considerations of cost and organization. What is certain is that it is our intention that these regional conferences should be the instrument by which the results of the great effort of 1960 will be made alive to the young leadership of the Church, and matters of strategy and action looked at in the framework of each particular area. In a sense the purpose of training will be performed essentially through these regional conferences. It is hoped that the participants in the 1960 teaching conference will serve as the nuclei of these regional meetings.



*Together on a new road*

This is in very summarized form the content of the project which we have now undertaken. I do not wish to speak here of all the problems it raises in terms of financial resources, staff work, and practical arrangements. But I would like to underline that this project will not succeed unless it is supported by the intercession of all members and friends of the Federation, and indeed of the whole Church. It will not succeed unless from now on all Student Christian Movements, and I include here their members, leaders, and senior friends, participate in the general effort of rethinking and serious study which is indispensable as a background to the international meetings which are planned. We shall be publishing documents to be used as working papers in local groups, national conferences, and personal study. Many issues of *The Student World* in the coming years will be devoted to topics related to the program of these various conferences. We hope that these will not be considered as more or less interesting material to be read out of curiosity or for intellectual satisfaction, but as a means through which to share in this great effort, perhaps the major single project the Federation has ever undertaken. We shall be very grateful to all our readers if they will not only read this material, but also send to the Federation office the results of their personal reflection or of the work they undertake in groups in relation to this project. We are starting out together on a new road, and we must remain faithful to one another. I say a new road, but after all, are we not on the same road which the Federation has walked for more than sixty years? Are we not trying in a new way to become again what in 1895 our founders wished us to be : a missionary instrument of the Church in the university indeed, but also an instrument through which students are called and prepared to take their part in the life and mission of the Church.

PH. M.



# The Mission of the Church

W. A. VISSER 'T HOOFT<sup>1</sup>

Many of the things which I am going to say will sound commonplace. But if one has to talk about a consensus, one has to talk about things that are trite, because they have been accepted by many. The fact that they are widely accepted does not mean that their potential implications have been developed, or that you cannot teach them in such a way that they strike fire. I will have to talk stenographically and that means that I will have to talk in ecumenical jargon.

The starting-point is that we are concerned with the whole task of the whole Church. When you ask what the ecumenical movement is all about, and what is the ecumenical movement in its widest sense, the answer is that it is concerned with the wholeness and integrity of the Church. In order to find any kind of unity worth talking about, you have to talk about that wholeness, that integrity, of the Church.

Another preliminary point: our common basis is biblical theology. Our criterion is what we find in our rediscovery of the Bible about the total calling of the Christian community.

We have come to see that the Church is part of the *kerygma*. Some of you belong to a generation that has already heard that quite often. It is, however, revolutionary in relation to the point of view of an earlier generation. If you do not believe this, read what the theologians wrote around the years 1900 to 1920; read what men like Harnack and Troeltsch taught my generation. The Church was certainly not part of the *kerygma* at that time.

Now this Church is by its very nature one universal Church. Its unity and universality are not simply desirable qualities. It is meant to be a united, universal people which demonstrates

<sup>1</sup> The "brief improvised description" of "the present consensus in the churches about the Church" presented by Dr. Visser 't Hooft to the WSCF Executive Committee and referred to in the editorial (p. 316).

in the world that the reconciliation between God and man has taken place in Christ. It can only demonstrate this when it lives and acts as one body. Its unity must become visible and tangible. That does not mean that it must be a body with centralized control and with uniformity in its forms of organization. But it does mean that there must be nothing in its life and message which contradicts or obscures its basic oneness.

Unity grows as the churches accept their total calling and perform that calling together. What is that calling? It has various aspects.

The first is mission, or to give it now its more specific name, *marturia*. This belongs to the *esse* of the Church; not just a thing that the Church can do or not do. Where there is no mission there is no Church in any full biblical sense of that word. And if it is of the *esse* of the Church, it is of the *esse* of the whole Church. It is out of the question that the Church should simply quiet its own conscience by saying: a certain number of us are engaged in mission and evangelism, and the rest of us need not worry about it, or at least not worry more than giving a few pennies a week for missionary purposes.

The second aspect of the Church's calling is service. *Diakonia*, the service which the Church renders both within its own ranks and to the world, is also of the *esse* of the Church. It is a primary function of the Church. That is important, because this helps us to answer the question whether the meeting of human need is a function of the Church, or whether it is only subservient to the evangelistic aim. *Diakonia* exists in its own right, and is a necessary and essential expression of the Church's life.

The third aspect of the calling is the *koinonia*, the fellowship in Christ which must characterize the Church, the communion which is essentially different from any other human relationship. The Church is a sociological phenomenon; it has its empirical, historical life, but this life does not exhaust its reality, its nature. The common bond of life in Christ distinguishes and separates the Church from all other societies.

It is true of mission, *marturia*; it is true of *diakonia*; it is true of *koinonia*, that in all these Christ himself is active. He



is the *Apostolos*, the *Diakonos*, he is the Shepherd and the Creator of the communion, and the one who builds his own Body. Therefore we do not only work for him; we work with him.

Now as we look at our churches, we find that they are utterly unadapted for that particular kind of task. We find churches set up with structures designed for a task of conservation, rather than for a dynamic task. And therefore we come to a point where there is a complete dichotomy between what we know from our Bible the Church ought to be and what the churches are in practice. That is why a fundamental renewal or reformation of the Church is absolutely inevitable if we are to be obedient to the vision that has been given to us.

We must add to this that all churches are in a certain sense today in a missionary situation. The things we say about mission and also about *diakonia* and *koinonia* apply therefore to all churches. We can no longer distinguish between an intact *corpus Christianum* and a younger church situation in a pagan environment. The differences have become relative.

It must also be stressed that missions means partnership. Missions is a process in two directions: a point that is now being theoretically accepted in almost every missionary society in the world, but which has certainly not been worked out in practice in the relationship as between the Western churches and the churches of Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

It is also a biblical truth of the first magnitude that mission requires unity. If today younger churches seek unity, it is because they have understood something that is not merely a practical truth, but a fundamental biblical truth, that mission and unity are interdependent.

One further remark about *diakonia*: there are three forms of the service which the Church renders. There is the *diakonia* which is rendered as between church and church within the Christian community. There is the *diakonia* which is rendered by the Christian community to needy human beings. And there is also the social, political *diakonia* by which the Church interests itself in the wider social issues because it has discovered that only by so doing can it meet the full needs of men. Thus

the "rapid social change study" <sup>1</sup> is an expression of the social *diakonia* of the Church.

These seem to me the main elements in our consensus. Now it would be less than honest if I did not add that there are other points on which we are not agreed with each other. At the moment I will just mention two important points.

The one is in how far all that I have said needs to be seen in a specific eschatological perspective. We are on the way to greater clarity on that, especially among the biblical scholars, but in the light of our experiences at Evanston<sup>2</sup>, we can hardly speak of a full consensus in that field.

The other point concerning which we are also still unclear is: what is the special theological place of foreign missions as compared with evangelism. This is a matter to which we must give much attention. I believe personally that biblical theology will lead us to discover that "foreign" mission has its own specific place in the calling of the Church.

<sup>1</sup> A study being conducted by the World Council of Churches on "The Common Christian Responsibility towards Areas of Rapid Social Change".

<sup>2</sup> The second Assembly of the World Council of Churches held at Evanston, U.S.A., in 1954.



# **The Ministry of Jesus Christ**

JEAN BOSCH

Neither the life nor the mission of the Church finds its origin nor its end in the Church. Whenever a church thinks she either should or can create her own life and determine her own mission, she inevitably ends up in ecclesiocentrism and clericalism and in consequent denial of her true nature. It is clear that throughout her history, now nineteen centuries long, she has been constantly threatened by this danger and is far from having always avoided it. Today the same temptation besets her, all the more acutely because in our day we have seen the development of a new sense of the Church. Now the only way to get over this danger and to resist this temptation is for the Church to return time after time to him who is at once her life and her mission : Jesus Christ the Lord. It is in him alone that she can find the only possibility of becoming what she is called to be. It is in his coming on to this earth and in the work he there accomplished that the foundation, the justification, and the purpose of her mission are to be found. The Church can have no other mission than to serve that service that Christ accomplished for men. So it comes about that to ask herself a question about her vocation is to try fully to understand her Lord's ministry.

There are certainly many ways of trying to understand the significance of the ministry of Christ and to give an account of it, yet human thought still remains unable to understand and human speech to express the fullness of it. In our attempt here to penetrate the mystery, we shall have recourse to one of the affirmations in which our Lord himself helps his disciples to know him : "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14 : 6). This affirmation evokes in its secret simplicity the unique character of Christ's ministry.

*Christ's ministry is himself*

We must first of all spend some time on this first person of the verb "to be" which occurs so frequently in the fourth Gospel. He who speaks here does so with total authority: he establishes without any hesitation the complete identity of his ministry and his own person; his charge is not something he has put on like a garment which suits you more or less, which fits more or less, which you can wear or leave off as occasion requires, which irritates you and which you can wear out of shape. His ministry is himself. His person has no other origin, no other meaning and no other purpose than his ministry. He is the Word made flesh, the Son of God made man; and this incarnation in which resides the final mystery of his being presupposes already the reconciliation of God with man which he came to accomplish. He is in himself the peace which he sealed between the Creator and the creature, for in the unity of his person he is true God and true man. He is not engaging in some service which could be defined outside himself, which he could have undertaken or not while still being himself: his existence is inconceivable apart from this service. "The Son of God came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." He is the servant, the minister. For this reason, to benefit from his ministry is to be met by him personally, to be possessed, loved, and taken charge of by him who is.

*He is the way*

He is the way. Not one of the many ways which may present themselves to men, but *the* way, by which alone men may arrive at their true destination. To answer his true call is, for man, to take this way, that is, to follow Jesus Christ, to go in by him. He is the way when he opens the road leading to the destination. That is the first aspect of the ministry which he accomplishes, the service he performs for us.

How is he the way? By the cross and resurrection. The cross is the sign and the end of the impasse upon which con-



verge all the roads which men may follow on their own account or into which their bad shepherds lead them. We are lost and we are guilty of losing ourselves ; we are like men crossing unknown or enemy country, who, rather than entrust themselves to their right and sure guides, prefer to rely on themselves or to join up with easy and dishonest leaders : whether through pride, covetousness, or lack of intelligence, they are deaf to the voice which called them and warned them, they are lost in the darkness and in the tangled undergrowth, and they perish in solitude. "The wages of sin is death." Thus humanity is a lost humanity no longer able to distinguish its right hand from its left, deprived in spite of passing illusions of all true hope and of a properly made road. Its future ends in death.

Jesus Christ is he who has opened a liberating and luminous gap in the impasse which bars the way. He is the right and sure guide, deserted by men but not deserting them. He has come down into the dark and desperate jungle where men grope and die, and in spite of being rejected by them he has shared their misery and their sin : not to be engulfed and annihilated with them but to overcome them. His cross is the final and decisive stage of the battle he fights, faithful to the love of God for men, to rescue them from destruction. And his resurrection shows that he has won the victory, that he has traced through and beyond death a way by which man may attain to liberty and life. That this way is henceforth open, that Christ crucified and risen is there in the centre of history, means that we are forgiven, that our wanderings are pardoned by the mercy of the Lord, that hope is given back to us.

It is in this way first of all that Jesus Christ serves us ; it is thus that he accomplishes his ministry among us and for men. He is the way. The fact that this way is open to us is written into our existence, into our souls and bodies, in baptism. When we receive this sign of the Lordship of Jesus Christ, we are inserted into the death and resurrection, that is, we have been set on the liberating way which is himself. In communion with him the way is opened for us. That is the first aspect of his ministry among and for us.

*He is the truth*

He is the truth. When we use this term "truth", we generally mean to affirm the exactitude of a fact or of an event, their material authenticity. In a slightly different use this word has a deeper meaning; it evokes the conformity of a thought or of a being with essential reality. "This affirmation is true", means that the content corresponds with reality as far as we perceive it; "this man is true" means that he manifests himself outwardly as he is in his deepest personality. It is rather in this latter direction that we must search for the meaning of Jesus' saying about himself, but giving it quite a different bearing. Jesus says not only that he is true, but that he is the truth. He is the complete manifestation, the full affirmation of that which is. But here a correction immediately becomes necessary: scripture does not recognize being in general, but him who is. "I am", that is the name under which he is known to the children of Israel. He is he whose sovereign existence has its origin and its eternal permanence in himself, and he is also he from whom all things in heaven and upon earth derive their existence. "Jesus Christ is the truth" means that he is the full manifestation, the revelation of him who is, and that thus every creature is replaced by him in his truth. He is "that true light which, coming into the world, lightens every man".

We find ourselves then sent back again to the mystery of the incarnation and of the cross. If Jesus Christ came down to earth to be the way for men, he came also to be at the same time their light. If we have strayed, we are also plunged into the darkness of ignorance and falsehood. Failing to recognize him who is, we no longer know whence we come, who we are, and whither we are bound. We are blind and we deceive ourselves; we have no solid ground to stand on. Jesus Christ is the truth before which all falsehood fades away. Where he comes and acts, the light rises upon man: on the secret places of his heart and on the orientation of his existence, on his relations with people and things, and on the powers of the world which surround him and dominate him. Through the word of Jesus Christ man stands revealed and set in his right-



ful place ; and if the cross shows him the condemnation that hangs over him, it is in order simultaneously to turn him to him who reveals himself therein as the God of mercy.

Such is the ministry of Jesus Christ : himself truth present upon the earth, he serves the cause of truth among men, and he serves men in truth.

### *He is the life*

Jesus Christ is the life. We use and apply this word daily : it refers to our reality, to our ability to walk and dance, to eat and drink, to laugh and to sing, to think and to love. And why should we not use it in this connection about our own life ? In any case, there is no doubt that that is also part of our human life.

But the sign of death hovers over this life. For life is only possible as long as the living God grants life, for as long as man receives his life from his Creator. When he rebels against his Lord, man turns from the sources of life ; and if he is allowed still to exist a little longer upon the earth, it is only for a brief time and as a sort of reprieve. His existence, however fine, is threatened on all sides, cut off at the root, gnawed by the power of annihilation and destined finally to descend to the tomb. "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls..." Thus the life of man is a life in death ; death which is inherent in his desire for autonomy, death which awaits him at the end of his days.

Jesus Christ is the life ; he, the Son of God, is life itself and the source of all life. And he came into this world which is subject to death, he faced and underwent death in order to master it in the very seat of its domination. He put on mortal flesh so that life might triumph over death in mortal flesh. The crucified one was raised up : he is living unto ages of ages ; he holds the keys of death and of hell. He reigns, and to reign means above all for him to communicate to men the life which he is and which he has made triumphant.

This life is given to us by him in our human state. It is in no way the negation of our humanity : it is rather the

fulfilling of it ; it has its source in constant communion with God in Christ ; it is created and revived by the Holy Spirit ; and that is why it is eternal life. Doubtless it will not be fully manifest while this world lasts ; we are still engaged in the struggle with death and must come through it. But death has lost its power and the new life which the Lord communicates to us is already a present reality. "You are risen with Christ", affirmed St. Paul to the members of the Church.

Thus has Jesus Christ fulfilled his ministry among us and still ministers to us. He has vanquished our death, he has given and still gives us life. He is our life.

### *The Church's ministry and life*

He is the way, the truth, and the life ; he is the priest, the prophet, and the king. He has accomplished all things, once for all and perfectly ; and he has done it for us men, ministering to us. He is the one minister of the merciful and liberating grace of God because he is himself that grace given to men. And now, what can the ministry of the Church be ? The Church is neither the way nor the truth nor the life. The Church is *in* this way, *under* the light of this truth ; the Church lives on this life. She is the Body of Christ. She can only show the way upon which she walks, reflect the light in which she stands, call us to the life which she receives. She can only serve the ministry of her Lord to men.

There is her ministry and there is her life.



# The Church, Bride of Christ, and her Mission in the World

DAVID E. JENKINS

So, if any man is in Christ — a new creation ! the old things have passed away, behold, they have become new ! And all things are from the God who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation ; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not reckoning their trespasses unto them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. (II Cor. 5 : 17-19.)

## *Salvation is accomplished*

The mission of the Church, to proclaim "the word of reconciliation" and to be minister to the world of God's reconciling work in Christ, is an integral part of the life of the Church in the world. Indeed the life of the Church in the world must not be thought of apart from its mission, but the life of the Church in the world is not to be equated with or thought of as exhausted by its mission. For "if any man is in Christ" there *is* a new creation ; "the old things *have* passed away, behold, they *have* become new". It is true that "it is not yet made manifest what we shall be", but "beloved, now *are* we the children of God" (I John 3 : 2). The truth of the emphasis on eschatology is distorted if we concentrate only on the End for which we wait and forget that the End is also present in Christ.

God being rich in mercy for his great love wherewith he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, quickened us together with Christ (by grace have ye been saved) and raised us up with him and made us to sit *with him in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus*. (Eph. 2 : 4-6.)

So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone ;

in whom each several building fitly framed together groweth into a holy temple in the Lord ; in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit. (Eph. 2 : 19-22.)

Even now those on earth who belong to the Church, the Body of Christ, are "in the heavenlies" in him ; their life is the life of the risen and glorified Christ, the Son of God who became man "as never to be unmade more" and who in his risen, ascended, and glorified manhood now presents and represents manhood perfected in obedience and offered to the Father. Thus he "sums up all things" in himself (Eph. 1 : 10), as the second Adam fulfilling the purpose and relationship with God from which the first Adam fell and to which in Christ the descendants of the first Adam are restored. This is the present and eternal state of Christ, and thus is our salvation accomplished, for Christ is not only our salvation in the sense of being our Saviour from sin, he is also our salvation in being that state to which and for which we are saved. Salvation *from* makes no ultimate sense without salvation *for*, and Christ is our Saviour from sin that we may be saved for — himself. Christ *is* our salvation and he is the definition of our ultimate life, for he *is* our ultimate life, and this is the life which he now lives before the Father.

*The life of the Church is the fullness of Christ*

However much this fact is refracted as it passes from eternity to time, from being true before God to being God's truth to us creatures of time and space and particularity, it *is* fact. This is our hope and our salvation. And it is not a proper understanding of the eschatological nature of the life and existence of the Church to see it as suspended between a "has been done" and a "not yet", while her present life takes its significance solely from a mission to proclaim the reconciliation achieved while awaiting the End. The life of the Church of course includes proclamation and expectation, but the basic fact of the life of the Church, the fact which gives power to its proclamation and makes its expectation a "sure and certain hope", is that what the Church proclaims and expects is present *now*, for when God raised Christ from the dead he "gave him



to be head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1 : 22 f). It is in and through the Church that men are gathered into the fullness of Christ, and this is the mission of the Church ; but the life of the Church is the fullness of Christ, and the life of the Church is therefore eschatological in the sense that it partakes in the End and not merely that it waits for it or works towards it.

### *Worship is the work of the Church*

The true nature of the Church's life is seen most clearly when her members are assembled together to obey the command of her Lord "in remembrance" of him (see I Cor. 11 : 23 ff) and celebrate the holy Eucharist, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. "For as oft as ye eat this bread and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come" (I Cor. 11 : 26). In doing this the Church is not doing something of an interim nature, but is setting forth eternal reality in a dominically ordained interim way. When Christ "comes", the reality and significance of his death will not cease to be proclaimed before God, for it is the very stuff of his eternal priesthood, as the Epistle to the Hebrews makes clear<sup>1</sup>. It is by Christ's death that all men are reconciled and offered to God<sup>2</sup>.

The risen, ascended, and glorified Christ is ever the Head of all mankind reconciled to God by his death, and in him the perfect obedience which is required of men but which men cannot give is ever offered to God (for it was he who on earth by his life of obedience and obedient death "through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God" [Heb. 9 : 14] as no other man could but as all men should).

Therefore the basic and ultimate category of the Church's life is not *mission*, which is directed *from* God through Christ

<sup>1</sup> Cf. e.g. Heb. 5 : 5-10 : ...Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek ...and having been made perfect he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation ; named of God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. e.g. Eph. 2 : 13 : But now in Christ Jesus ye that once were far off are made nigh *in the blood* of Christ ; and verse 16 : and might reconcile them both *in one body* unto God *through the cross*.

towards men. It is *worship*, which is directed through Christ to God, and wherein the Church enters into the very life of God through him who is both perfect Man and very God.

Therefore the life of the Church in its inner and abiding reality never changes and will never end, for it is the life of God entered into through Christ. More and more persons are gathered into this life as history and the mission of the Church proceed, and those members of the Church who are alive on earth at any time assuredly need the exhortation, "If ye then were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God" (Col. 3 : 1). But the Church on earth must not be regarded as something temporary whose purpose is exhausted by its historical mission. The Church on earth has her mission because she is already sharing in the redemption and restoration achieved by the Son, and the reality of the life and mission of the Church on earth will not be rightly understood unless it is realized that in the Church on earth one is confronted with the outpost in time of the whole Church militant, expectant, triumphant, who in her Head, Christ the Lord, is ever present before God, redeemed creation partaking in the life of the Trinity.

Therefore, as already hinted, the most characteristic activity of the Church is worship and not the proclamation of the gospel. By "most characteristic" I mean that which provides the best clue to her true character ; that which, amidst the ambiguities and perplexities of a world which has been redeemed and yet which "groaneth and travaileth together until now" (Rom. 8 : 22), most clearly sets forth the life which the Church enjoys in Christ ; and therefore that activity which we must always have in mind and be prepared to use as a criterion if we are seeking to see more clearly into the life and mission of the Church. If a definition of "worship" is required, then perhaps one should turn to chapters four and five of the Apocalypse which are too long to be quoted here. It is the only attitude and activity proper to the creature before the Creator, supposing the creature to be fit to live in and capable of enduring the Creator's presence. This fitness has been gained for men by "the blood of the Lamb", and redeemed mankind is present before God, indeed "in the midst of the throne" (Apoc. 5 : 6), in



Christ, the Head of the Church. Worship is, ideally, the proper reaction of man to God, the attitude to him that is proper because he is God and for no other reason whatever, the proper and only activity of man living in the presence of God. Since God and God alone and God without qualification or justification is life, the fulfilment of life is to be in the presence of God, the consummation of creation is to share in the life of God. Therefore the activity of worship is the essence for the creature of entering into the life of God, and "activity" is the least inadequate word to use because to be in the presence of God is to enjoy the fullness of all things, and for this we must use the most vibrant and active word available.

It is in this sense, therefore, that the activity of worship is characteristic, definitive, of the life of the Church, for it is the activity of the Church directed solely towards God; it is the Church entering into the heavenly life of the redeemed creation present before God; it is, therefore, the Church enjoying the heavenly life which she has in her Head. But just as this worship is perfected in the perfect Man and only through him, so the Church's worship is focussed upon and only properly understood in the "remembrance" of him, when in obedience to his command and in the power of his Spirit the Church takes, blesses, breaks, and offers the bread and wine which are his body and blood, so that through him she enters into his offering and is herself offered. This is no temporary act or mere wayfaring activity; it is the eternal act of Christ in his body wrought out for man in time at the Last Supper and on the Cross, consummating a life of offering, the act whereby all men are redeemed and united in Christ to fulfil the purpose of their creation, which is to dwell with God and enjoy him forever. Therefore, in the Church's worship is seen the life of the Church, the everlasting worship offered by men in Christ, which is the eternal life of the Church.

### *Worship demands mission*

From this abiding reality of the Church's life arises the command to mission, the power to fulfil the mission, and the criteria for defining the mission. To be turned towards God

in worship is not to be turned from the world but towards the world, for the God who is worshipped in Christ is the God who is revealed in Christ as complete, outgoing, holy love, and the very worship becomes a command, for the life of God into which the Church enters is this life of love which is giving, searching, and gathering. And so this mission is a manifestation of the life of the Church which is the life of God, not the eternal reality of the Church's life but the expression in and to the world of the eternal reality of the life. And the mission is the activity of God, not the conversion of men to belief or the recruiting of men to the ranks of the saved (and incidentally to our side!), but the living out in the world of the life of God which is the life of love and in which the Church lives.

Hence also the definition of the Church's mission which is to care for all men, that they may know themselves to be within the scope of God's love, and for all creation, that it may be made the means of offering to God. It is only in God that all men and all things are fulfilled and take meaning, and therefore the Church, already partaking in the life of God, has the task of reaching out to all men and all things, that they may be brought into the life of God where alone life and meaning can be found. Hence the concern for all aspects of life and society, but it is a concern whose criteria are the love and holiness of God and which cannot therefore ever work by the standards of the world. If we are firmly aware that the reality of the Church's life is not her mission but her worshipping life in and to God, then we shall be equipped with the criterion for keeping that difficult balance between affirming the world — but not to the point of identifying the Kingdom of Heaven with Utopia, and denying the world — but not to the point of forgetting the creation is God's work and is redeemed by Christ who is to "sum up all things" (Eph. 1 : 10). The Church is not concerned primarily to save men from the world or to build the world into the Kingdom of Heaven. The Church already lives in the life of God which is the salvation of men and the fulfilment of the world, and in the light and practice of this life she must work out how far men are to be withdrawn from the world and how far men must strive to change society so that God may be met and worshipped through the world.



But in the midst of the perplexities which working out such a balance in day-to-day individual and corporate decisions must always bring, the Church has the power to fulfil her mission because in the midst of the world she already enjoys the heavenly life ; she has the transcendent reality of being the Bride of Christ, being sanctified and cleansed by the washing of water with the word (as baptism makes real for every new member), and being nourished and cherished by Christ because her members are his Body (as the sacrament of the body and blood in the Eucharist makes real for all the members on earth — see Eph. 5 : 23-32). This life of hers does not depend upon her mission for its reality, nor is it a life which comes to an end with the present dispensation. The life of the Church on earth is the life of the age to come, the life of the Trinity into which men enter through Christ, the life whose fullness of wonder we can only begin to express by the adoration and worship which God in his infinite love and mercy enables us to offer to the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit.

# Evangelism Today

NORMAN GOODALL

As believers we affirm that Christianity is a revealed religion. The revelation is embodied in an evangel — good news. It is news of a more crucial embodiment — the incarnation of God in the person of Jesus Christ. This news tells of a redeeming act; it is a pledge and foretaste of that Kingdom of God in which life finds its fulfilment and history its meaning. The basic historical documents of the Christian faith have become known by the same news-telling term: they are gospels or evangels; their authors have been known through the centuries as evangelists. Christianity has from the beginning, and by reason of the news which it contains, laid upon all who profess the faith the necessity for transmitting it. A non-evangelical Christianity would be a contradiction in terms. Moreover, bound up with this initial impulse to transmit the news received there is the conviction, derived from the acts and words of Jesus, that the fulfilment of the news is dependent on the faithful proclamation of it to the whole world. Only thus can the Kingdom come in its fullness.

## *The urgency of the calling*

A living Church is a transmitting Church. There is a renewed awareness of this fact within the churches today. Biblical study, theological reflection, and experience born of participation in Christian fellowship are all deepening the realization that we cannot faithfully confess the gospel without also conveying it. This recognition is sharpened by awareness of the kind of world in which we live. The evangelical and missionary obligation of the Church proceeds from the nature of the faith and not from the state of the world, but the latter underlines the urgency which has always belonged to the evangelistic calling of the Church. It is a sobering fact that

at the end of one of the greatest missionary epochs of all time even the strongest of the younger churches in Asia represents only a tiny minority movement within the vast non-Christian population: in most instances Christians number only one or two per cent of the population. It is not merely a sobering fact but an alarming one that the rate of population growth is working against the numerical strength of Christendom: humanly speaking, the birth-rate is beating us.

There are also more serious factors than statistical shocks which emphasize this urgency. For example, it is more than ever patent today that while Christianity is by its very nature a transmitting faith, the business of transmitting, persuading, or missionizing is not being left to Christianity. In many Western universities it is apparent that Buddhism is not only making a serious bid for the religious allegiance of a strife-weary West; it is, in fact, succeeding in convincing some of the heirs of Christendom that its claim is a valid one. Islam speaks with a very different voice from Buddhism, but in the present political and racial scene it holds certain strategic advantages which it is exploiting for missionary ends. The term "missions" nowadays does not connote only Christian missions: there are many rivals in the field and they number more than the classical foes of Christianity.

### *The evangelistic responsibility*

I am not sure whether students are still talking about the "post-Christian era" and the "post-Christian West", or whether these phrases are already out-moded. In any case, the situation to which they point shows no sign of an early disappearance or transformation. Whether the great "ages of faith" were always as great and assured in their faith as we sometimes assume may be debatable. What is indisputable today is the fact that the whole culture of the West, no less than that of areas of even more rapid social change, lacks the foundation of a commonly accepted, deeply rooted, clearly articulated faith. Within this enormously complex situation more than one kind of responsibility falls upon Christians. Among other necessities the obligation to transmit the faith raises the prob-



lem of communication in the most searching manner. This becomes more than a matter of paraphrasing traditional beliefs or modernizing archaic forms. It means wrestling with the nature of truth and its impartation, the meaning of revelation, and the instruments of its disclosure and perception. It requires gifts, understanding, and insights which enable a believer in the Word of God to find words which partake of the power of the Word.

How is the evangelistic responsibility of Christians to be met? Let us begin by looking at some of the ways in which the task is today being understood and attempted.

### *Personal proclamation*

First, there are those who affirm that the presentation of a "simple gospel", essentially personal and individual in its challenge and appeal, is evangelism in its most distinctive and authentic meaning. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son. Christ died for our sins. He loved me and gave himself for me. Believing we have life in his name. There is joy and peace in believing. Accept this. Confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and go in peace. The evangelist is essentially the preacher of this news: evangelism is the personal proclamation of this gospel by word of mouth, whether from a pulpit or from individual to individual. This conception of the evangelist's task may be accompanied by a readiness to paraphrase the words of scripture, to popularize theology, to illumine the message by contemporary illustrations, to convey it through psychological processes of diagnosis and treatment, or to use the modern techniques of communication made available in an age which has become audio-visually minded. Alternatively these things may be abjured on the ground that the gospel needs only to be preached with fidelity to the words of scripture and with a simplicity of belief which derives its confidence from the promises of God. The Bible says... That is enough. In either case the problem of communication in the sense in which this was alluded to earlier does not loom large; where it is recognized it is no more than a matter of techniques — psychological, verbal, aural. It is not

bound up with any new theological insights, or with the necessity for intellectual travail over ultimate questions, or with the problem of knowledge, or with any questions posed by scientific disciplines or cultural upheavals. Again, evangelism so conceived is simple communication from person to person.

### *Corporate worship*

There is a second conception of evangelism which, while regarding the message as directed essentially, or at any rate primarily, to the individual, contends that the worshipping Church, not the evangelistic preacher, is the supreme instrument of communication. The worship of the Church may include the preaching of the Word, the persuasive speaking of the message, but it is far more than this: it is corporate prayer and adoration; it is corporate participation in that grace which lies at the heart of the evangel and which is made available supremely through sacramental worship. Churches such as those of the Orthodox communion, which some evangelicals regard as lacking in evangelistic obedience, would contend that by this fidelity in worship — worship founded on purity of doctrine and authentic liturgy and order — they stand in that succession which is evangelical as well as apostolic. Among other differences between these first and second conceptions of evangelism, this emphasis on the worshipping *community* as the instrument of transmission is of particular significance.

### *Community witness*

There is a third conception which again attaches crucial importance to the worshipping community as the evangelizing agent. In this, however, the emphasis is less exclusively upon the supreme moments of sacramental worship: it is upon the total experience and witness of a community which, being gathered in the name of Christ, testifies to the good news and its redemptive power. This total experience includes the Church's worship and sacramental ministries, but the evangelical power of the community is bound up with the fullness, depth, and reality of its life as a fellowship of the Spirit. From this stand-

point an evangelical concern may display itself just as zealously in work for the unity of the Church as in some "soul winning" exercise, for the unity may be sought preeminently in order "that they may believe". Again, evangelism as motive and objective may be the driving force behind a concern for the integrity of the fellowship and the behaviour of its members one towards another. The impression made by church members in their daily business dealings, in the quality of their home life, or their personal standards and disposition may be regarded as even more relevant to the propagation of the gospel than the extent to which church members participate in evangelistic campaigns or house-to-house visitation. Is the visible, localized fellowship such eloquent testimony to the good news of redemption that an "outsider" can discover within it generousities, charities, and challenges which have compelling spiritual power? The Christian integrity and spiritual vitality of the localized, worshipping community becomes from this standpoint the crucial factor in faithful evangelism.

### *New forms of evangelism*

I would add to this somewhat arbitrary classification of evangelistic conceptions and policies a fourth illustration which takes this emphasis on the corporate still further. This not only makes the role of the community crucial in the transmission of the evangel; it becomes central to the outworking of the gospel's redemptive power. Such evangelism still has at its core the proclamation of a simple word of forgiveness and redemption to the burdened individual, but it sees the individual — and would compel the individual to see himself — in relationships from which there can never be any disentanglement or detachment, whether in sinning or being saved. It declares that all these relationships must be made subject to the judgment and mercy of the Word, if the gospel is to be truly proclaimed and the Kingdom come with power. Christ died for our sins. What does this mean for the world of 1957 with its own characteristic agonies and frustrations, its achievements and defeats? God so loved the *world*. What does reconciliation to him mean for all the corporate structures of human



existence and behaviour? From this standpoint the evangelistic task becomes as wide in its scope and complex in its character as life itself. The evangelist may find himself involved in technical as well as moral questions touching the nature of a responsible society—especially in areas of rapid social change! He may claim that the gospel is the incentive which leads him to set up in the name of the Church such an unusual type of “holy club” as the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs. Activities which may appear to some as unevangelical “mimicking of United Nations” may, to these others, be essays in Christian communication for the sake of the gospel. The evangelical obedience of the Christian *laos* in its scattering throughout the world may take a thousand new forms which seem strange and dangerous to those who are in the succession of a more traditional evangelical piety.

### *Facing fundamental differences*

The enumeration of these four different conceptions of evangelism has admittedly been arbitrary. The lines of differentiation are never as clear in life (happily) as they appear in definition or argument. There are obvious points at which some of the above interpretations of the evangelistic task run into one another. They may be held by the same person and prove complementary rather than conflicting. At some other crucial points these varying descriptions, for all their arbitrariness, have behind them fundamental differences which cannot be glossed over. For many who would be most at home in the first category I have described, some of the ideas and concerns reflected in my subsequent illustrations would be regarded as grave departures from true evangelism, betraying erroneous conceptions of the gospel and obscuring or distorting the meaning of Christ's redeeming work. They would contend that the corporate structures of our temporal existence are in themselves not capable of redemption; they belong to another order. Christianity has moral implications for the saved life as it sojourns within this transitory order; but no social or political activity, except as this may happen to bring one individual into contact with another, comes within the sphere

of redemption. The temporal, ethical by-products of our eternal redemption have nothing to do with the saving word of the gospel, or the object to which it is addressed.

There are differences here which must matter to all who are concerned about the evangelical obedience of the Church and its members. One of the great needs of today is that these differences shall be faced in relationships which make for deep, honest, and patient discourse between Christians whose convictions and experience have led them into these differing positions. Mere bickering on such matters is unworthy of the evangel in any understanding of the word. The issues are not dealt with responsibly by merely attaching to them such terms as modernist, liberal, obscurantist, orthodox, or fundamentalist, and playing the familiar game with these counters. It is not enough to write off all views but our own as heretical. The fact that the kind of differences which I have enumerated can proceed from an initial concern for the gospel and its transmission requires an openness to the convictions of others for the sake of the gospel. I am not arguing that with patience, amiability, and an accommodating spirit a nice synthesis of all these views could and should be achieved, although for my own part I find elements in each of the conceptions I have sketched which are indispensable to my understanding of the Church's calling.

### *A personal note*

If I may let a merely personal reference intrude into this article, I am convinced that while the heart of the gospel lies in that simple word of mercy and redemption which must be spoken from person to person, the contemporary dimensions of the evangelistic task are in fact as wide as those indicated in the fourth of my arbitrary categories. I do not see how we can today go into all the world, teach all nations, and prepare them for the coming of Christ and his Kingdom, without becoming implicated, for his name's sake, in all that touches the life of those for whom he died. What I have referred to as corporate structures are, in fact, the bases of human relationships. They are the context within which — and at some

points the means through which — human relationships are ordered either in obedience or disobedience to the reign of God. They will never constitute the abiding framework of the Kingdom, for here we have no continuing city. They are, however, inescapable occasions for “discerning the Body” or not discerning it, for confessing Christ or denying him, for submitting to his will or resisting it. In Christ God became incarnate within this temporal and historical existence. It cannot be regarded as a sphere irrelevant to his word of judgement and mercy.

Again, to continue this personal note, no conception of evangelical obedience which I can understand enables me to *substitute* for my personal responsibility the witness of the body of believers to which I belong. I know that evangelism is a personal responsibility to be fulfilled by me as an individual. Nevertheless, I also know, on biblical and experimental grounds, that when my individual witness becomes part of the corporate testimony of the redeemed community, the Word goes forth with a power unequalled by the most faithful act of individual discipleship.

Yet again, while I happen to have been nurtured in a conception of the Church which attaches supreme significance to the gathered fellowship of believers and their corporate responsibility, this can have little meaning for me apart from my belief in the Church as a fellowship of the Spirit. The corporate testimony of which I speak is not simply the good example of a well-behaved group of Christian men and women: it is something which flows from the real presence of the Lord who is himself the gospel and who, according to his promise, inhabits the fellowship. I can know no moment when this is more assured than the moment in which the community of the faithful worship, receiving from its Lord that pledge and reality of his grace of which the sacraments are signs and seals.

### *The need for togetherness*

For reasons of this kind I covet the closest relationships which can be achieved between Christian men and women whose understanding of the meaning of evangelism leads them



into such diversities of view and practice as I have described. Yet while I find it relatively easy to see the common ground between many of the differences which I have analysed, I am also aware that at many other points honest discourse and true encounter will disclose differences in biblical understanding and theological conviction which cannot be harmonized in any synthesis. Some new stage must be reached in which the Word corrects our words and the truth of the gospel rectifies our errors and partial insights. At this point evangelical obedience in an ecumenical setting demands more than "cooperation in evangelism". It requires a togetherness in humility and charity, in biblical study and prayer, in intellectual discipline and selfless service, in that waiting upon the Word which will lead to the moment when the evangel surprises the evangelist in the range and newness of its truth and power.

# Is Ecumenism a Hindrance to Evangelism ? <sup>1</sup>

## *A Point of View*

KEITH R. BRIDSTON

One of the most persistently recurrent themes in present-day ecumenical ideology is that mission and unity are one. Its very persistence, however, makes one suspicious. Suspicions, of course, are expected from an anti-ecumenical viewpoint : a persistently recurrent theme of the propaganda from this side has been that unity and mission are *not* one and that ecumenical and evangelical interests are incompatible. Reservations, however, from an ecumenical viewpoint are not only unexpected but misunderstood. To say, for example, that there is an inevitable tension between mission and unity — from an ecumenical standpoint — is dismissed as ecumenical disloyalty, or nonsense, or worse. Or it is said that, if tension does exist, it is purely a practical matter, and that ontologically or eschatologically such tension does not, and cannot, exist. The fact is that tension between mission and unity is both a practical and theological reality. The practical expressions of this tension, which are everywhere evident and obvious to anyone who does not close his eyes to them, are only superficial reflections of much deeper and more fundamental theological reality. And one of the chief reasons for the fact that the discussions on mission and unity within the ecumenical circle have lacked life and dialectical fire, is that the *inevitability* of this tension has not been recognized. What has appeared

<sup>1</sup> This paper was written at the request of the organizers of the consultation on "Ecumenism and Evangelism", held at Nyon, Switzerland, in February 1957. This meeting brought together representatives of the five ecumenical bodies which participate in the World Christian Youth Commission : the World Council of Churches, the World Alliance of YMCAs, the World YWCA, the World Council of Christian Education and Sunday Schools Association, and the World's Student Christian Federation. The author was advised to make the paper as provocative as possible, if necessary becoming himself "the devil's advocate".

to be essentially a practical problem has been accepted as such, and the solutions which have been applied to it have been largely practical : that is, the demon of practical tensions supposedly can be exorcized by the invocation of organizational harmony...if not immediately, at least ultimately. It is all very simple *except* when the dogma of theological harmony is challenged by the heresy of theological tension.

The reality of this inevitable theological tension between mission and unity is illustrated by an affirmative answer to the question : is ecumenism a hindrance to evangelism ? Ecumenism can be and is a hindrance for three main reasons : when it is an evangelistic distraction ; when it is an evangelistic deterrent ; when it encourages evangelistic delusions.

*Ecumenism is a hindrance to evangelism when it is a distraction*

The human mind can concentrate on only one thing at a time. To a large extent the same is true of churches. Even though all churches have a variety of interests, concerns, and departmental divisions, there is always a central motivating or integrating factor which gives organizational unity to each body and provides it with a distinctive character. The vocational direction of a church is determined by this underlying concept of its nature, work, and mission. This can be seen by an examination of the differences between churches today as well as by the study of church history down through the centuries. The selection of this integrating factor is sometimes imposed by external circumstances — political, social, economic ; sometimes by deep theological bias ; but sometimes by a self-conscious choice arising out of a clearly conceived and strongly held vocational vision.

In the selection of this factor there is often a competitive struggle. This is particularly acute when it is between unconscious bias and self-conscious vocation. This was the struggle which many churches experienced in the beginnings of the missionary movement in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries : the traditional bias to be an established folk-community versus the vocational vision to be an expanding evangelistic body. This struggle, however, is far from over. It is partic-



ularly not over in the ecumenical movement. Some take comfort in the fact that the ecumenical movement is a product of the missionary movement. This in no way insures that ecumenism is a step forward evangelistically. It may be just the opposite. It may be a slipping backward into the old, natural bias after the gradual fading of the missionary vision. As Bishop Newbigin has written in *The Household of God*: "There is a real danger at the present time of a false sort of ecumenism, an attempt to find consolation amid the wreckage of the old Christendom in the vision of a new and wider Christendom, yet without the acceptance of the hard demands of missionary obedience."<sup>1</sup>

It is instructive in this connection to analyze the history of the ecumenical movement. Certainly it is an outgrowth of the "great century" of missionary initiative. But in its later development, especially in its transition to a church movement, the role played by those bodies representing a national, established, or folk-church tradition has been decisive. For example, the cool attitude of the Church of England to the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910, and its later persistent pressure (along with other ecclesiastically centred groups such as the Greek Orthodox and the Swedish Lutherans) to change the ecumenical movement from non-denominational, to inter-denominational, to inter-church, is an illustration of this. Certainly, there are churches in the ecumenical movement whose conception of its purpose largely rests in the vision of a resurrection of the "old Christendom". The ecumenical movement itself, therefore, is an uneasy compromise between its original missionary foundations and its later ecclesiastical evolution. Professor J. C. Hoekendijk has detected the same evangelistic degeneration in the missionary movement itself with its increasing interest in the doctrine of the Church: "In history a keen ecclesiological interest has, almost without exception, been a sign of spiritual decadence; ecclesiology has been a subject of major concern only in the 'second generation'; in the 'first generation', in periods of revival, reformation, or missionary advance, our interest was absorbed by Christology,

<sup>1</sup> Page 10.

thought patterns were determined by eschatology, life became a doxology, and the Church was spoken of in an unaccented and to some extent rather naive way, as being something that 'thank God a child of seven knows what it is' (Luther)."<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Hoekendijk's thesis of "churchification" and "spiritual decadence" is, of course, one of very great ecumenical controversy. Nevertheless, he offers enough historical examples to suggest that there is a significant difference between a church-centred and a mission-centred enterprise. And the ecumenical movement's own history causes certain uneasiness at this point. The increasing church-centred orientation of the ecumenical movement has meant, to some degree at least, a decline in evangelistic concern.

This, perhaps, can be most clearly seen in the churches participating in the ecumenical movement. For some of them, ecumenism has partially usurped the place of missions in their interest and activities. This is, of course, not necessarily bad. But, as has been said, it is difficult for anybody to concentrate on more than one thing at a time. And this is particularly so for churches with limited resources in finances and personnel, especially the younger churches of Asia and Africa. If ecumenism presents to the older churches of the West the temptation to escape their evangelistic responsibility by a romantic pilgrimage in pursuit of the "old Christendom", ecumenism presents an equally dangerous temptation to the younger churches to escape their evangelistic responsibilities by the utopian pursuit of a "new and wider Christendom". In quite practical terms, an overburdened executive in a church in Indonesia, for example, has to decide whether he is to give the limited time on his schedule to ecumenical gatherings in Djakarta with fellow Christians, or to evangelistic projects among his Moslem neighbours. Theoretically they are not mutually exclusive. In practice they very often are. And in practice it is easier and more pleasant to take part in ecumenical fellowship than in evangelistic engagement.

Ecumenism is a hindrance to evangelism because it is a distraction. It provides a distraction from the central and

<sup>1</sup> *International Review of Missions*, July 1952.

ultimate vocation of the Church to evangelize. It provides a distraction by setting up an ecclesiological rather than a Christological centre for integrating church life. Finally, it provides a distraction by turning the attention of the Church upon itself rather than upon the world. Ecumenism is essentially an introverted concern (at least in its present dominant manifestations), whereas evangelism is an extroverted one. There are attempts being made to combine these two. But up to now they have not been entirely successful, either in theory or in practice, and they have chiefly underlined the old truth that it is hard to look two ways at once. Until, therefore, the ecumenical movement offers more substantial evidence of its missionary vitality and effectiveness, ecumenism will continue to present the temptations of distraction to the churches, and therefore act as an evangelistic hindrance.

*Ecumenism is a hindrance to evangelism when it is a deterrent*

Not only does ecumenism tend to substitute other centres of integration for the Church in place of its true evangelistic one, and to encourage introverted instead of extroverted orientation, it also may deter the Church from fulfilling its evangelistic task. Here again the substitutionary effect of ecumenism is a danger. The evangelistic concern of the churches, as it was expressed in the missionary movement, represented the global dimensions of the Christian faith. In a dramatic way, the missionary enterprise demonstrated the validity of the universalistic claim of Christianity: it was a constant symbol to the churches, especially those in the West, of the essentially world-wide character of their faith. This symbolic representation of universality which the missionary movement provided for the churches in the nineteenth century, is to an increasing degree being provided for the churches in the twentieth century by the ecumenical movement. Is it an adequate substitute? Potentially it is. But this potentiality can only be realized through action. That is, the ecumenical movement is not an adequate substitute simply through the merit of historical continuity. It can become a dramatic and symbolic representation of universality only through its practical accomplish-



ments in realizing unity and actual evangelism. The missionary movement represented universality by what it did, and the same must be true of the ecumenical movement. As Professor Paul Tillich has written :

Missionary work is that work in which the potential universality of Christianity becomes evident day by day, in which the universality is actualized with every new success of the missionary endeavour. The action of missions gives *pragmatic* proof of the universality of Christianity. It is a *pragmatic* proof. It is the proof, as the Bible calls it, of power and Spirit. It is not a theoretical proof, which you can give sitting in your chair and looking at history ; but, if you are in the historical situation in which missions are, then you offer a *continuous* proof, a proof which is never finished. The element of faith is always present, and faith is a risk. But a risk must be justified, and that is what mission does. It shows that Jesus, as the Christ and the New Being in Him, has the power to conquer the world. In conquering the world, mission is the continuous pragmatic test of the universality of Christ, of the truth of the Christian assertion that Jesus is the Christ <sup>1</sup>.

An ecumenism which represents universality purely in terms of unity offers proof only of the universality of the Church *in* the world and not of the universality of the gospel *for* the world. To that extent at least it is an incomplete substitute for the missionary movement as a symbol of universality. Would it be complete if it also represented universality in terms of mission ? Theoretically it would. But in practice there are some very grave difficulties. At the Amsterdam Assembly of the World Council, the churches covenanted their "given unity" in Christ by affirming in the Message : "We intend to stay together". By actually coming together at Amsterdam (as at all ecumenical meetings) the churches offered proof of their unity, just as the constituency of the Assembly provided proof of their universality. But as far as the mission of the Church is concerned, the Assembly could only offer a prayer to God "to stir up his whole Church to make this gospel known to the whole world". Such a prayer is only arm-chair proof, to use Tillich's expression. In short, the

<sup>1</sup> *Occasional Bulletin*, Missionary Research Library, Vol. V, No. 10.

ecumenical movement has to find other means of manifesting universality than ecumenical assemblies, which can merely represent the universality of the churches and their unity, and that only imperfectly. But when ecumenism seeks to offer the other proof, the evangelistic proof of the universality of Christ for the world, conflict arises with the covenant of togetherness.

It works out in this way: the ecumenical movement is based on the supposition of equality. The World Council is made up of *churches*. Though these churches represent many different backgrounds, many different outlooks, and (most important in this context) many different stages of development and maturity, they have equal status in the Council. The fact that there is no distinction made between, say, the "younger" and "older" churches, is completely justifiable: theologically a body is a church, or it is not a church. The unqualified acceptance of this fact in the organization of the World Council marks a significant step forward from the vacillating compromises of the missionary movement on this point.

This theological equality which the ecumenical movement rightly accepts may, however, obscure the actual inequality in missionary resources. Theologically there may be no "younger" and "older" churches. But there are certainly very great differences between churches in money, personnel, and other resources for doing evangelistic work. As Canon Max Warren has suggested in *The Christian Mission*:

Christian realism does... demand an honest appraisal of the particular stage of development at present reached by what are called the younger churches. Economically depressed, they are preoccupied with ways and means. Constitutionally free, they are seeking to adjust themselves to the problems of control and to the creation of the necessary machinery. Politically, they may well be under serious threat as to their liberty of action. All these factors mean that at this moment, a "moment" of dangerous opportunity, these younger churches are inevitably preoccupied with matters which preclude the possibility of adequate attention being paid to those pioneering enterprises upon which a church's life really depends<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Page 108.

In this situation, ecumenism tends to be a hindrance to evangelism by acting as a deterrent. There are small, minority churches set in overwhelmingly non-Christian environments which assert their priority in evangelistic responsibility in such areas in the name of this equality. In Asia, for example, there are churches which have not only refused to invite workers from foreign churches to participate in their evangelistic work, but have also denied these foreign churches the right to open new evangelistic initiatives in places where they were unable to carry on such efforts themselves. Elsewhere, there have been instances of churches representing a tiny minority in non-Christian lands asserting their exclusive missionary prerogatives in their countries. This may be a heartening, even if an exaggerated sign of independent determination on the part of former mission churches to assume their full share of "partnership in obedience" in evangelism. However, it may be the wolf of xenophobic nationalism clothing itself in the respectable sheepskin of ecumenical equality. Ecumenism, understood in these terms, tends to be an excuse not only for failing to do the evangelistic job oneself, but also for denying others the possibility of doing it.

By the same token, the so-called sending churches, faced with this attitude, are hesitant to take initiatives which might be construed as "paternalistic", or, say, "colonial", and thereby endanger their ecumenical relationships. After all, they say, we have solemnly covenanted "we intend to stay together". And so, they stay together — to do nothing. Evangelism is sacrificed on the altar of ecumenism.

This ecumenical deadlock would not be so tragic were it not for the eagerness of sectarian groups — from Roman Catholics to Holy Rollers — to take advantage of it. While the ecumenical churches delicately avoid any evangelistic initiatives which might possibly offend their "partners in obedience", the sects, uninhibited by such concerns, move in and take over. In the ecumenical circle there is an inclination to let partnership always take precedence over obedience, or to interpret obedience so that it signifies obedience to one another rather than to the Lord. It may be argued that these ecumenical handicaps will prove to be evangelistic advantages



in the long run : indigenous churches are more effective evangelistic agents than foreign missions. But this does not dispose of the *present* dilemma. There is an element of urgency in evangelism which is not entirely satisfied with long-range ecumenical strategy. Quite practically, new fields are being opened and old fields are being invaded by non-ecumenical sects. Whole villages, formerly Protestant, have been captured by the Roman Catholics in Sumatra, largely because the hierarchy is free to introduce as much foreign money and foreign personnel as it wishes, without depending on the opinions or decisions of autonomous national churches. By no stretch of the imagination can one, from an ecumenical standpoint, condone such autocratic or unilateral actions — or indeed even call it true evangelism in this particular instance — yet sectarianism provides a freedom for evangelistic movement which must challenge ecumenical apathy and inertia. When ecumenical relations stand in the way of the Lord's prayer for workers to enter fields which are white for the harvest, the time has come for the ecumenical movement to re-examine its *raison d'être* in the light of the parable of the son asked by his father to work in the field who answered, "I go, sir", and went not.

Furthermore, if evangelism is thought of in its broadest aspects, the effect of ecumenism acting as a gag on the prophetic voice of the Church must be seriously considered. The heroic stand of the churches in Norway, Holland, Germany, and elsewhere, against Nazi totalitarianism represents a heritage of prophetic ministry which belongs to all churches through the ecumenical movement. But are the churches bound together in the ecumenical fellowship speaking in the same uncompromising, prophetic tones today about Cyprus, Suez, Hungary, Colombia, Algeria, Mississippi, or South Africa ? Individual Christians and churches do speak. But many of the concrete issues of political injustice, tyranny, and slavery faced by the churches today have world-wide dimensions and require ecumenical attention. Is it possible for the ecumenical churches to forbear to speak in clear and prophetic words to these situations in the interests of ecumenical harmony ? There are already disturbing symptoms of the pressures to gag what might be a prophetic ecumenical voice in these matters, the

Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, and to transform it into the well-modulated accents of a spiritualized global debating society. The fact that the CCIA, for example, now mimics the United Nations in the form of its resolutions is one such symptom, and has already had the effect of a partial gag to turn the ecumenical voice into one mumble among others in the glass house on the East River.

A good deal of pride has been taken in the increasing number of churches participating in the ecumenical movement. If, however, ecumenism did not gag the churches in fulfilling their joint prophetic ministry, even greater pride might be taken in the number of churches which had withdrawn! For considering the churches as they actually are, and the world situation as it actually is, it is almost inconceivable that separations would not have resulted if the divisive flaming sword of Christ's prophetic Word had been uncompromisingly spoken to any one of the issues already mentioned. Dr. Visser 't Hooft wrote, at the time of the Amsterdam Assembly of the WCC, of the impossibility of ecumenical relationships remaining purely organizational in character, for, as he said, "the Church in the churches insists on asserting itself"<sup>1</sup>. It is not being suggested that the ecumenical voice should be heard in a prophetic way without *considering* the consequences. That would be irresponsibility. But the ecumenical voice must be uttered in a prophetic way, when that is required, with the *willingness* to bear the consequences — even perhaps the consequence of Christian division. If ecumenism excludes that, then it is a hindrance to evangelism, for the prophetic voice is also the evangelistic voice.

Ecumenism today introduces a real evangelistic dilemma when it serves as this kind of deterrent. It does so when it fosters the idea that theological equality and equality in evangelistic resources are identical. It does so when it provides a convenient cover for evangelistic negligence by weak churches and a theological rationalization for evangelistic irresponsibility by strong ones. It does so when it promotes a passive acceptance of the *status quo* by the avoidance of fresh, original,

<sup>1</sup> *The Universal Church in God's Design*, p. 185.

pioneering evangelistic movements or experimental initiatives which might imperil ecclesiastical good relations. It does so when it gags the prophetic voice of the Church in the name of Christian harmony.

Churches governed by ecumenical principles cannot compete on an equal level with anti-ecumenical bodies following *laissez-faire* evangelistic policies. Nor should they try to compete on that level. However, ecumenical etiquette cannot be the last word for churches with real concern for evangelism. At least to admit that ecumenism can be an evangelistic hindrance by acting as a deterrent is the *sine qua non* for an honest appraisal of the evangelistic potentialities of ecumenism. The Church ultimately "insists on asserting itself", and what is crucial for the ecumenical movement is that its evangelistic nature should assert itself within the ecumenical community and not have to do so outside.

*Ecumenism is a hindrance to evangelism when it encourages delusions*

True ecumenism is essentially dichotomous. The evangelistic problem is not that it *is* dichotomous, but that there is an unwillingness to accept that it is. This dichotomic character derives from the tension between mission and unity already mentioned. There is no missionary expansion or evangelistic advance which does not challenge existing unity. When a new member is added to the body, the unity which bound the body previously must be broken to include the new addition. In the early Church, for instance, the unity which the first fellowship of disciples had through their tribal homogeneity as Jews was challenged by the Gentile mission of Paul and had to be fought out at the Jerusalem Council. The Council is only one of the many examples of the tension between mission and unity which the early Church experienced. The geographical expansion of the Church out from its original base also strained the unity of the Palestinian brotherhood. The story of Christian expansion makes it crystal clear that the centrifugal force exerted by the mission predestined the break-up of the existing, primitive unity. And missionary expansion



made inevitable the later history of separation between such Christian centres as Rome and Constantinople, as well as the increasing variety of cultural, linguistic, and ethnic differences which gave the Church such a heterogeneous character. Mission produced a divided Church, would not be putting it too strongly. As Firmilian of Caesarea wrote in ca. 250 A. D. : "They do not observe the same things in Rome as they do in Jerusalem, just as in other provinces there are great varieties resulting from the variety of places and of people." And the more the Church has expanded, the greater, more numerous, and deeper these divisions have become, up to the present day. Does the rise of the modern unity movements run contrary to this history, or does it only confirm it by showing that expansion has now decelerated to such an extent that visible ecclesiastical unity can be established and consolidated ?

Whatever the answer to this question may be, it is evident that the whole history of Christian expansion is a series of variations on the theme of the tension between mission and unity. Just as in the early days the inclusion of Gentile converts challenged the original Judaistic unity, so in later times, the centrifugal forces of Methodist evangelism, reaching out to economic and social outcasts, broke the unity of the established Church of England. The present forms of ecumenical unity themselves, fragile and fragmentary as they may now be, are in the same historical continuity and may share the same destiny.

Against this historical background, it becomes evident why an ecumenical movement must be dichotomous, incarnating the tension between mission and unity — a tension which arises from the centrifugal and disintegrating pressures of evangelism running into the centripetal and integrating forces of unity ; the challenge to every unity realized in the Church by the unrealized unity with the world. Against this background it also becomes evident how ecumenism can be a hindrance to evangelism.

In the first place, ecumenism, which does not recognize its dichotomous character, encourages the delusion that ecumenism is evangelism. That is, it not only fosters the idea that ecumenism "is just as good as evangelism", which, of course, is

completely beside the point, but also the idea that ecumenism takes the place of evangelism. It is no longer required of a Christian or a church that they be evangelistic, but only ecumenical. Such views result from the belief that ecclesiastical unity is the be-all-and-end-all of ecumenism. And carried to its logical conclusion, it means that the divisive powers of mission are both feared and opposed.

In the second place, and closely related to the first, ecumenism which does not recognize its dichotomous character encourages the delusion that unity guarantees evangelism. Here it is thought that unity is a panacea which will cure all evangelistic ills and deficiencies. It is proclaimed, in ecumenical fervour, that a united church is an evangelistic church ; that to be evangelistic one works for unity, and by achieving unity, evangelistic problems are magically resolved. The Church of South India, for example, is popularly acclaimed, not for the sake of the unity which has been realized, but for the unproven evangelistic advantages that unity supposedly provides. The fact is, however, that though a united church may solve some of the evangelistic problems of the previously divided body, it also has new evangelistic problems of its own. In short, every Christian community, united or divided, has to face its evangelistic task as a thing in itself. That unity itself may be an evangelistic hindrance underlines this fact.

No doubt unity and mission are related. But how ? Ecumenism which ignores the question, or assumes that the relationship is automatic, creates delusions which are hindrances to evangelism. Even the High Priestly Prayer, often quoted on behalf of ecumenism, does not make that relationship as simple and clear as some would like to make it. The disciples are to be one in order that the world may believe. But what ? The belief spoken about is specific : "that the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them even as thou hast loved me". One might assume this to imply acceptance and salvation (if one does not accept the distinction between general and saving knowledge), but elsewhere the world is explicitly excluded from the intention of the prayer, and considering the general context and use of terms, at most it is "an oblique prayer for the world" (Hoskins). In any case, it contains no

implication that the realization and manifestation of unity absolves the disciples from the apostolic vocation to go out into the world to proclaim the gospel and to carry on their evangelistic task from Jerusalem to the uttermost parts of the earth. Unity and mission belong together, but they do not take the place of one another.

This was obviously true for Paul. He made considerable efforts to maintain unity with the elders in Jerusalem, and he was concerned for the unity within the congregations which he had founded. But when Paul was confronted with the practical problem of maintaining unity with Barnabas at the price of compromising on the inclusion of the disobedient Mark, he took Silas and separated from them and went his own way to fulfil his missionary task. Paul found the Christian unity with Barnabas and Mark expendable because he had given his life for a greater unity, the universal claim of the gospel on all mankind, and his ultimate obedience was to a Lord who was more than the unifying Head of the Church, the one who was the centre of unity for the whole world, one in whom "*all* things hold together". He was never under the delusion that one unity guaranteed the other.

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The intention of putting forward this point of view is to be "merely provocative" (to use an expression applied by Robert Graves to a controversial series of lectures on poetry he recently delivered in England). It is being expressed within the ecumenical circle, and directed largely to the cognoscenti; it might succeed in its provocative intentions more full if it were said not only that "ecumenism is a hindrance to evangelism *when...*", but "*ecumenism is a hindrance because...*". The fact is that today ecumenism, in reality, *is* a hindrance. And it is precisely among those who are concerned that it should not be this hindrance that this fact should be discussed. What that discussion may perhaps most clearly bring out is that the ecumenical community should not be one which is striving to synthesize mission and unity, but one which recognizes the inevitable dialectic tension between mission and unity and expresses that tension in life and action.



# Orthodoxy and Mission

FR. K. PHILIPPOSE

It is often alleged, even by enlightened churchmen in the West, that the Orthodox churches have consistently been slack in extending the missionary vocation of the Church. It is not easy to analyze the contribution made by various Orthodox churches in the field of evangelism and missionary work in a short article like this. All I shall do is to evaluate in a summary way a few specific achievements of the Orthodox churches and certain characteristic emphases in their method of evangelization.

## *The Moslem bondage*

The year 1455 is one to be remembered in the history of the Orthodox churches. It was then that the great Byzantine empire finally fell to the Ottoman Turks and the Byzantine Orthodox churches entered into their bondage. Constantinople became the Turkish capital, and on May 30 of that year the Turkish ruler entered the city and held Moslem services of thanksgiving in the great church of St. Sophia, which from that date became a Moslem mosque. This sanctuary, to which all the Orthodox of the empire looked for inspiration, the beauty and splendour of whose divine services could influence a heathen prince like Vladimir of Kiev to make a decision as to his baptism, could no longer be a place of light and inspiration for Orthodox Christians.

Henceforth the Byzantine churches, with the exception of that of Russia, lived in bondage and suppression under the Moslem Turks, until some of them were liberated in the last century. Even today the great centre of Byzantine Orthodoxy, the "second Rome", is under the Turks, and the very existence of the Ecumenical Patriarchate is often threatened by Turkish uprisings. The great strongholds of Orthodoxy in the Balkan

countries and the Middle East all met the same fate, though with the liberation of some of these countries new life has started in the churches there.

This historic fact has a deep bearing on the mission of the church in Orthodox Christianity, since the remarkable dynamism that was apparent in the early centuries in these churches completely disappeared and all missionary activity ceased. Under the Turkish oppression and persecution the church was forced to become purely defensive, making an effort to live and nothing more. The activism which was so characteristic of Eastern monasticism and which was mainly responsible for upholding the mission of the church, became tepid and was channelled by various ways into contemplation. While the churches in the West, aided by the advantageous political position of their countries, were expanding rapidly into the remotest parts of the world, the Eastern Orthodox churches, still under the tragic effects of the deadly poison of Moslem oppression, were striving only just to live.

### *Missionary work by individuals*

This sad situation of the Orthodox churches, brought about mainly by adverse political and historical events, is often so misunderstood that some conclude that Orthodoxy has no mission at all, or if it did have, it has now lost it. This evaluation is not correct, as we shall see when we go deeper into the history of Orthodoxy.

Any student of church history knows how alive was the missionary vocation of the Byzantine church in the earlier centuries. The names of certain individuals are synonymous in Eastern church history with the church's mission, while in the Western churches missionary societies bore the greater part of the burden of missionary work. The Society of Jesus (Jesuits), for example, started in 1534 in the Roman Catholic Church by seven students, with Ignatius Loyola as their leader, has developed in the past four centuries into a missionary society of unrivalled strength and stature, fulfilling the missionary vocation of that church. The various missionary societies of the Anglican and Protestant churches have likewise grown.

In the Orthodox Church one fails to find such organized, centralized, and closely knit missionary societies. Often the missionary work was done by individuals who responded to the divine call to proclaim the gospel and to bring people to Christ. They were indeed dynamic men who, by their life of intense sacrifice and profound devotion to God, attracted men and women in large numbers to Christ and his Church. When we read of the work of Methodius and his brother Constantine, pioneer missionaries to Moravians and Slavs in the ninth century, we are filled with wonder and amazement. They were just two individuals without any missionary society to back them, and yet they started the conversion of the Slavs which later spread to the whole of Northeastern Europe.

### *The Russian Orthodox Church*

Of all the Byzantine churches the Russian Orthodox Church was the most dynamic in the mission field. Though the gospel began to be preached in Russia as early as the ninth century, it took a very long time — several centuries — before Christianity had its roots firmly fixed in Russian soil and spread to the whole of the country. In the whole process of colonization of the land of Russia the church took a creative part, and she not only followed the people — she led them. She led them even at the time when she seemed to be deserting them by withdrawing from the outer material world into the world of the spirit, for it often happened that the ascetics and hermits were the pioneers on the rough and half-wild virgin soil in the North and Northeast of Russia. For them the dense forests served as a desert, but they were followed by the world from which they wished to escape, and so they had to leave their settlements and go still further, cutting into the very depths of the primeval forests. Thus the ascetic retreat from the world encouraged, as it were, the advance of the world, a process which historians call monastic colonization.

For a long time the Russian church was in a state of constant movement, leading practically a nomadic life and always entering the lands of the unbaptized either simultaneously with the state or even before it. To the last, the Russian church



was like an island in the midst of a pagan sea, and even inside Russia itself she was always a missionary church. Calling unbelievers to the faith was part of her daily life.

### *Use of the vernacular*

In evangelization Byzantine Orthodoxy used a different method from Roman Catholicism. This was putting in the forefront the use of the vernacular or local dialects in preaching, in church services, and in the translation of the scriptures. In other words, evangelization was a way of awakening new people to the Christian life, and at the same time it served as a means of adaptation to a tradition of culture, without any negation or suppression of natural differences and peculiarities. The Slavonic and other peoples, enlightened and baptized by the Byzantine missionaries, were drawn into the vortex of Byzantine civilization, yet did not lose their Slavonic or national features.

The Russian missionaries from the very beginning used this method. In fact, we find that in the fourteenth century the great Russian missionary, St. Stephen of Perm, had to work out a Zirian alphabet in order to translate the holy scriptures, the liturgy, and other church books for the evangelization of the district of Perm. He always preached and officiated in the vernacular, which had no real written form until he worked out the alphabet. The missionary ideal of St. Stephen of Perm continued to be a typical guide in the Russian church until quite recently. The gospel was preached and divine services performed in many tongues.

Of course, it cannot be denied that sometimes this creates certain problems for the missionary. Not all people possess their own culture; not every people or tribe has its own spiritual words, its own creative style for biological and spiritual expressions and phenomena of different levels. A missionary must indeed possess great tact and sensitivity in order to find the right way.

It was also the Orthodox tradition to develop an indigenous ministry wherever the church spread. We find two noteworthy examples in the Russian church: the creation of an Orthodox

church for the Tartars in the Kazan region with their own native clergy, and the creation of a Japanese church which grew and until recently was one of the dioceses of the Russian patriarchate.

With the growth of the Russian empire the missionary work of the church also expanded. There was first the work among the whole Slavonic population, which then spread to the region of the Finnish tribes whose religion was a sort of animism. The Russian church also came face to face with Islam, especially in the sixteenth century after the conquest and annexation of the Tartar kingdom along the Volga. It is true that many Tartar races accepted baptism at once, but the mass of the Tartars remained faithful to Islam, and to the last the Volga region remained an experimental field for missionary work. In the seventeenth century the Russian church encountered the Lamaism of the Kalmuks, who migrated to the nearer provinces of Russia, with some favourable results.

#### *Russian missions in the nineteenth century*

The next active period for missionary work for the church of Russia was the nineteenth century, as due to the hostile attitude of the state it could not make much headway in the eighteenth century. The mission commenced its development in the provinces along the Volga. The New Testament was translated into several languages, native schools were opened, and teaching was begun in the local dialects. Special training was also given to the missionaries.

It is interesting to note that up to this time Orthodoxy had been contented with missionary work done by individuals. But in 1867 the missionary brotherhood of St. Gouri was started, and occupied itself with the external and internal organization of the mission. A whole series of brotherhoods came into being in the various dioceses, and a network of native schools began to spread.

There was also further missionary expansion: a mission was started for the Eskimos who led a sort of nomadic life on the marshy plains, and there was a mission to Siberia. An Orthodox mission in China had sprung up in the eighteenth

century, principally on behalf of Russian prisoners of war who had settled there, and by the middle of the nineteenth century several outstanding permanent missionary centres were established in Siberia, the Altai mission being the most remarkable. It is also important to note here that missionary expansion of an earlier period had reached Kamchatka, and from there Christianity spread across the islands to Alaska in North America.

Nikolai Kazatkin was the first Russian missionary to labour in the spreading of Orthodox Christianity in Japan. He began his work in 1861, and became Archbishop of Japan or rather its apostle in the true sense of the word. The mission grew quickly. Again the method of translation was adopted, and a network of Orthodox parishes spread gradually all over Japan. Parish life goes on actively and intensely. Perhaps few are aware that for many years an Orthodox theological seminary existed in Tokyo. The Japanese church long ago became an independent diocese of the Russian patriarchate, and it now has two bishops of whom one is a Japanese, and all the clergy are Japanese.

### *Orthodox churches in Asia*

Those Eastern churches which did not accept the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon in 451 continued their life outside the orbit of Byzantine Orthodoxy. It is one of the tragedies of Christian history that these Oriental churches, though professing the same Christological doctrine, yet using the Cyrilian formula of One Nature, are separated from their Byzantine Orthodox brethren. Let us hope that the ecumenical movement in its intensive dynamic advance will soon bring together these Christians and heal the schism. Like the Byzantine churches, they have suffered greatly from Mohammedan oppression and persecution, and yet from time to time have shown vitality in upholding the missionary vocation of the church.

We have some records of the missionary activity of the Armenian church among the Mongols, but on the whole it has continued to be the national church of Armenia. Though its

members are today widely dispersed all over the world, they tend to be exclusive and isolated, using the Armenian language and liturgy, irrespective of where they live.

The Nestorian church was intensely missionary in the earlier centuries and had missions in India, China, and Central Asia. But in the great suffering and wholesale massacre under the Turks it has lost all missionary vitality and dwindled into a small community.

The church of Syria, too, sent missionaries to India from time to time, but under the persecution of the Turks it has suffered greatly, and is only just struggling to live.

The two churches in this group which have shown missionary vitality in recent years are the Ethiopian church and the Syrian Orthodox Church of Malabar India. The Ethiopian church is greatly blessed in having a very enlightened emperor to guide its destiny, and though it has yet a long way to go on the path of progress, it is adding to its numbers thousands of converts, sometimes by mass conversions of pagans in that land. Here again, there is no centralized missionary work or missionary organization to pioneer the movement of evangelization or to consolidate its fruits. Certain priests of most dynamic calibre, filled with the spirit of God, are doing isolated but wonderful work. It was reported to me when I was in Addis Ababa three months ago that in the last year twenty thousand people converted from paganism had been baptized by the bishop of Harrar and the priests under him. Ordinands are being sent for training to the theological schools of Halki, Athens, and elsewhere, and in Addis Ababa itself a theological school is being built up by the emperor.

The Malabar church claims descent from St. Thomas the Apostle, though this has not been proved or disproved historically. We know for certain that the church was in existence there in the early centuries of the Christian era. The course of its history is rather dim. It is said that the early converts to this church were high caste Hindus, and because of this the church continued as a caste church, without fulfilling its missionary vocation.

This church too has had many vicissitudes. As a result of proselytism from outside and trouble from inside it is now



divided. In the sixteenth century, under the influence of Roman Catholicism, a part of it became Roman, and even today the Roman proselytism continues. In the nineteenth century, as a result of the work of the Church Missionary Society of the Anglican Church, there was further schism resulting in the formation of the Mar Thoma Church and the Anglican diocese of Central Travancore, which has now merged with the Church of South India. The Orthodox Church has had to struggle hard to live between these two opposing forces of proselytism.

However, in its struggle to live it has regained vitality. Almighty God has mercifully raised up several dedicated men who have untiringly laboured to revitalize the church in its various spheres of activity. Sunday schools and youth movements have spread to every parish in the church, and work among women has been organized.

### *Orthodox missionary societies*

But the most remarkable thing is the missionary advance that has been made. In the beginning some individuals who felt the call of God responded and went into the field on their own. Gradually workers gathered around them and societies were formed. The Servants of the Cross, the most important missionary society of this church, was begun in this way. Father Petros, who was a school teacher, had the call, and he went out to work among the "untouchables", preaching the gospel and alleviating their distress. His life of austerity and sacrifice soon attracted other people to the work, and he gathered around him a group of twenty workers. They are the Servants of the Cross, and they have converted and baptized over twenty-five thousand "untouchable" people. These workers have a simple rule of life but no mother house or any establishment. The villagers feed them, and alms and offerings are given to them by the people for their support.

Christu Sishya Ashram at Tadagam near Coimbatore was the first missionary venture the church undertook in a different language area. A group of young people under the leadership of the saintly Bishop Pakenham Walsh have started this work

in a Tamil-speaking area where no missionary has ever penetrated before. Their ideal is to witness to Christ by living a corporate Christian life in the ashram and to attract non-Christians. The Indian Orthodox Mission is at the moment mainly concerned with ministering to the scattered flock of the Orthodox Church in the various parts of India and East Asia. There are also religious communities like the Order in Imitation of Christ (Bethany Ashram), Mount Tabor Convent, and a few others, all started with the purpose of doing the missionary work of the church.

This very sketchy analysis should reveal that the allegation about the lack of enthusiasm of the Orthodox for missionary work does not stand on a firm basis. We Orthodox are more aware than others that we have "not done what we should have done", but so many extraneous factors such as changing political conditions have to be taken into consideration. However, this is not the time for us to glorify our past accomplishments, but if looking back on the excellent examples of our saintly leaders prompts us to a deeper understanding of their ideals and efforts to follow their example, this will only spur our enthusiasm in the further expansion of the mission work of all Orthodox churches. In this the Orthodox do not want to be isolated from the other bodies of Christendom, because it is under the banner of mission work that all the followers of Jesus Christ hear the trumpet call of their Master in identical words, urging them to "go and baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost".

## **The Place of Foreign Missions in the Mission of the Church**

CHARLES W. FORMAN

A missionary society in Europe, which has traditionally maintained missions in China and India, today finds that it is excluded from China and highly limited in the personnel it can send to India. By consequence, it now faces the question : should it try to open mission work in some other foreign country, or should it give up any attempt to work abroad and simply concentrate on its own country where it can find pagans aplenty ? From the opposite side of the earth comes another version of the same question. The churches of Asia are awakening to new selfhood and responsibility, and as they do so they are asking themselves whether that selfhood and responsibility imply that they should now send forth foreign missions, or whether they too, even more than the Europeans, have sufficient work within their national borders to exhaust their missionary potential. To a greater or lesser extent all churches have to face this problem today. Are they to regard foreign missions as a distinct and necessary part of the total mission of the Church, a part in which every church must be involved ; or, are they to regard foreign missions as essentially the same as any other part of the mission, and therefore as making no distinctive demand for the involvement of every church ?

This is a question on which the Church as yet does not have any commonly accepted answers. What is said here can only be said by way of one contribution to an on-going discussion. But the discussion is a critical one for Christian work, and the issue needs to be settled soon if the Church is to understand its task and act with understanding in the present-day world.

*The "Christendom illusion"*

The problem has arisen as a result of the breakdown of the "Christendom illusion". Foreign missions have been too long and too simply linked with that illusion. To speak of foreign missions was, in many people's minds, to speak of sending missionaries from the Christian to the non-Christian nations. It has taken an unbelievable amount of nationalism, communism, fascism, genocide, and total war to drive that illusion out of men's minds. But today it is clear that there are no Christian nations, and that consequently there is no place for foreign missions seen in those terms. The lands of traditional Christendom need the challenge of the gospel just as truly as the lands of traditional heathendom. Wherever the so-called foreign missions have, because of some romantic appeal, or because of some assumed superiority on their part, hidden this fact from people's eyes, they have obstructed rather than advanced the mission of the Church. Witness the way in which a church in the southern United States may assemble large crowds to consider missions in Africa, while it refuses to consider its mission to the segregated society in which it lives. Or, to show that the problem is not limited to the West, witness the way a church in Asia may develop great interest in starting a foreign mission, while it neglects and ignores a faltering home mission effort to which it is already committed.

Not only is it clear today that all nations are the objects of the Christian mission, it is also evident that the Christian mission is foreign in every land. Christians are strangers and sojourners in this world; they live here with the sense that their home is elsewhere. "Here we have no lasting city" (Heb. 13: 14). Therefore every mission is a foreign mission. On the other hand, it can with equal truth be said that for Christians no men are foreign, since no men are outside their family connection. All men are children of one Father and are equally precious in his sight. The gospel is for all men and includes the whole world in its purview. Therefore no missions can properly be called foreign from the Christian point of view. So we are brought to the place where we have to say



that all missions are foreign, and that no missions are foreign, and in both cases there is no distinctive place for what has hitherto been known as "foreign missions".

### *An ecumenical mission*

What we realize today, is simply that we have a mission to the whole world, an ecumenical mission rather than a foreign mission. This is what is meant when it is said that the ecumenical era has replaced the foreign mission era. This new understanding is probably more in accord with the outlook of the early Christians, who acted on the commands, "Go into all the world" (Mark 16: 15), and "Be my witnesses...to the end of the earth" (Acts 1: 8). It was not foreign mission but world mission that they were concerned with. Their presumption in the eyes of the world was appalling. That little band of men believed that they were to fulfil the calling of Israel to be a "light to the nations" (Isaiah 49: 6). But again, when they saw themselves in those terms they were not thinking particularly of foreign missions; they were not taking the light of one nation to others, but, as the people of God, who happened to be located in one nation, they were bearing the light to all men. Whether they went to their own nation or to others, they were still acting as the "light to the nations". And similarly today, the Church is involved in an ecumenical mission whether it works in one nation or in many.

### *A mission to the whole world*

So far so good. But this is not all that needs to be said about the ecumenical mission. A church which works entirely in one nation may indeed be said to be involved in an ecumenical mission, but this statement is true only if that church carries on its work with a full consciousness of its dependence on, and its relation to, other churches in other nations. It must realize that its mission is to the whole world, and that while it may, because of limited resources, work only in one area, it can do so only because others are carrying on part of its work for it in other areas of the world. The local mission has validity only when it is acknowledged as a part of the

world mission. The national mission has validity only when it is kept in relation to the foreign mission. Consequently, any newly sensed call to proclaim the gospel to paganized homelands, to secularized intellectuals or industrialized labourers, can be followed only with a deep sense of relation to, and dependence on, the mission to all other men in the world. The mission to a de-Christianized West can never be undertaken as a substitute for, but only as a supplement to, the mission to an un-Christianized East.

Furthermore, since the mission of the Church is to the whole world, and this means the whole world in a very concrete, geographical sense similar to the concrete quality of the incarnation, the needs of the whole world must be taken into consideration in the sending out of any mission. Proximity cannot of itself determine location. Some consideration of needs in relation to available resources must always be involved — not in a purely mechanical way but as a way of expressing a wide-spreading concern. Out of such considerations it will be clear that (except in those countries where need in relation to available resources is obviously most pressing) every church will be involved in going out across national boundaries to present the gospel. Even the early Church, with its very limited geographical knowledge, was not content to limit its missionary effort to the political boundaries within which it was set, though those boundaries were so wide as to include what most men thought of as the world. We know little about the mission which crossed those boundaries, but it would seem that the first place in the world to become officially Christian was the city-state of Edessa, which lay to the east of the Roman Empire, and that the first nation to embrace Christianity was the nation of Armenia, which again lay beyond the confines of Roman jurisdiction. Clearly there was a "foreign mission" from the earliest times.

We see then that the foreign mission is far from being eliminated when it is included in the ecumenical mission. It is, rather, for the normal church, an essential part of that mission. Yet in all this there has not appeared anything distinctive about the foreign mission. It is a part like any other part and is included because it is such. Yet the question

remains: does the foreign mission also have certain distinct characteristics which would suggest that it must be included, not only because it is a part of the whole, but also because it embodies some essentials of the mission which none of the other parts embody, and which would be missed if a church did not engage in foreign missions? There are reasons for thinking that the answer to this question should be "yes".

*An international "wall-breaking-down" mission*

First, there is the fact that a mission which is sent into a foreign nation expresses the world-embracing, international quality of the Christian Church as nothing else in the Church does. The fact that the Church exists in many nations does not show its *international* quality, for in each nation the Church participates in, and is imbued with, the national characteristics and culture of that nation. The Russian church is very different from the American church, the African church is very different from the Scottish church. By abstracting certain beliefs that are common to all we can speak of an international church, but that is admittedly an abstraction. Even if all are brought into relation with each other or are under an over-arching authority, as in the case of the Roman church, the distinctive national characteristics continue, making it doubtful whether the Church in its concrete life should be called international or only multi-national. Nor should we expect the Church to change in this respect. According to the biblical doctrine of creation (Gen. 10: 5) and consummation (Rev. 21: 26), it would seem that distinctive national characteristics are not to be destroyed in the Church but purified and eternally established. Therefore the Church's world-embracing, international character is not to be expressed by the obliteration of national distinctions, but rather by the action of members of the Church who, fully sharing and participating in their own nationality, go out to serve and witness to people of other nationalities. It is this movement of the Church *between* the nations that is really *international* and world-embracing.

When Paul reported in his letter to the Galatians (2: 7) that he "had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircum-

cised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised", he implied that here was a distinct type of mission which could not be fulfilled simply by adding on more missionaries to the circumcised. The mission which breaks out of the cultural-national borders is a distinct kind of mission of which Paul himself was the precursor. He was a Jew who went to other nations than his own. As he did so and as other Christians do so today, they demonstrate the culture-transcending quality of the Church, even when the Church remains, inevitably, culturally conditioned.

Furthermore, a mission which goes to other nations today expresses the boundary-crossing, "wall-breaking-down" nature of Christianity more truly than any other form of mission. For there can be no doubt that the highest walls which divide men today are not those of class or race or creed, but those of national allegiance. Men may disagree sharply on many points with their fellow nationals, but when the chips are down they side with their nation in war against other nations as they would never do against their compatriots. Therefore, when a church works across national barriers, it is bridging the most divisive barriers in contemporary human life.

### *Every church is called to foreign mission*

If all this is true, then it would seem to follow that *every* church is called into foreign missions, even if it is a church which has on its doorstep the area of greatest need in the whole world. A gigantic effort to meet that local need will not take the place of meeting the needs of foreign peoples. The form and amount of the foreign mission may vary according to resources, but each church in its own way should take a part. The impoverished African women who took up a small collection each week to help meet a need they had heard about in an American slum were just as truly participating in a foreign mission as the Americans who sent doctors, teachers, and ministers to meet the needs of the people of Africa. Be the amount large or small, be it in one form or in another, there must be an expression of commitment to, and concern for, the people of other nations. To this every church is called.



*Every Christian must be willing to go*

To say that every church is called to foreign mission is not to say that every Christian is called to be a foreign missionary. Obviously, since this is only one part of the Christian mission, that could not be the case. Every Christian is called to concern and support for all parts of the mission, including the foreign mission, but he can enter into active participation only in one particular part, whether that be foreign, national, or purely local. And yet at the same time it must be said that, in light of the calling of the Church, every Christian must be *willing* to be a foreign missionary. Only then can he *know* whether he is called to this part of the mission or to some other part. The question of willingness must always be met with an affirmative reply, if the call of God is to be known at all. If a person decides in advance that he is not willing to go into foreign missions, then he can never be quite sure where his calling does lie. There is always the suspicion that that which he is not willing to do, is perhaps the very thing to which God is really calling him, but because of his previous decision his ears have been shut at that point and so he can never know. Only when that limitation has been removed, and a person says "yes" — as far as his willingness to go into foreign missions or any other part of the mission is concerned — only then is he free to hear God's call. Only then, in fact, can he decide freely at all about his work. For as long as there is something which in his heart he is not willing to do, then a decision about work cannot be made in freedom but only within restrictions. The unwillingness makes a free decision impossible.

So the willingness of the Christian must come first in foreign missions as in anything else. Then comes the call of God to the Christian, and through the Christian to the Church. For though we have all along been analyzing the call to the Church, we must recognize that in real life the call comes to the Christians in the Church and not to the Church as some abstract entity. In fact, if the first commissioning of Christian missionaries, as it is recorded in Acts 13, is any guide, it would seem that the Church does not wake up to its call until after God has called particular Christians, and they have responded

and are ready to go. ("Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.") This seems to have been the case again when foreign missions were renewed in the time of William Carey and Adoniram Judson. It was these Christians who, having themselves heard the call to be foreign missionaries, stirred the churches to engage in foreign missions.

The place of foreign missions in the life of the Church, then, is not a matter which can be determined abstractly as if it were a riddle of ecclesiology. It is ultimately a question to be decided in the actual life of Christian men living together in the Church with hearts open to the calling of God. As they with willing hearts face that call, the Church will find what part foreign missions should play in its life.

# The Church and the University<sup>1</sup>

JACQUES DE SENARCLENS

Our aim is to define the conditions in which a real encounter could take place between the Church, on the one hand, and the university, on the other — in other words, between the living God, present and active in his Word, and the representatives of university culture. Let us make clear at the start that it is not only a question of a personal and religious encounter with people, but also of contact with their works, that is, with the methods they use, the research they undertake, and the results they obtain, all that can be grouped under the general heading of culture.

I hope I may be allowed, however, to introduce these observations by some personal remarks which will explain the form, if not the content, of this lecture.

## *Faith and culture*

For several years I have been a student pastor at Geneva, and this fact has led me to reflect often upon the problem of the relation of faith to culture. I confess I have been frightened every time by the difficult problems which it raises. I have been painfully aware of the ambiguities of a ministry which was ill-defined and which was fulfilled amidst many confusions. First of all, what do we mean exactly by culture? It is not a static reality but a continual movement of man towards the conquest of himself and the universe. For many of us this concept is irresistibly attached to the whole of the literary and philosophical knowledge with which we are impregnated. But have we yet established any solid contact with the world of science and technology? Moreover, have we really found

<sup>1</sup> An address delivered at the WSCF Student Pastors' Conference held at the Ecumenical Institute, Château de Bossey, Switzerland, May 1957.

a perspective in our explanation of the phenomena of culture through economics and sociology? Are not our idea of culture and our method of approach always desperately incomplete?

There are other sources of confusion. We have lived through the encounter of a Church uncertain about its foundations with the still surviving liberal university of the nineteenth century. Misunderstandings accumulated on both sides. The Church, on the one hand, oscillated between the pietism which attracted a few students anxious to cultivate their religious needs, and the secularization in which we always ended up as soon as we sought to reach the faculties. As for the university, it was divided broadly into two large groups: the scientists still soaked in a slightly modernized form of the positivism of Auguste Comte—who thought faith was a survival from the past and who sang the glories of scientism. The other group contained the belated representatives of idealism, sympathetic to religion on condition that it agreed to present itself rather as a form of gnosticism.

I am aware that our situation in the universities of this country was rather a special one. Since then things have moved: the Church has grown firmer, and the university has lost some of its prejudices. In spite of this, the problem remains very complex, as much on the side of the Church and theology as of the university schools, wherein everything is ceaselessly changing.

For these reasons I have not tried to give you a systematic exposition. I shall simply sketch in for you a few landmarks which will help us, I hope, to see more clearly our vocation in the service of the gospel in these places of intellectual enquiry.

### *Attitudes that compromise*

And first of all it might be useful to say definitely what forms this encounter could not take. In this connection it seems to me that you must reject, at the outset, three attitudes which would compromise you right away: isolation, confusion, and domination.

Let us begin with the third. To *dominate* the university, in the manner of the Middle Ages, would be impossible even



if we wanted to. But we might try to achieve the same result by using another method, that is by practising a kind of theological imperialism which would show itself in a series of syntheses of spiritual values and rational values. The *analogia entis* of Catholicism heads inevitably to this alliance between divine truths and certain human truths, under the domination of the former, and subsidiarily to the politics of the Vatican. It is from the starting-point of this fundamental notion that the claims of this church are best understood. But Protestantism has also tried, in some sense, to take possession of culture by arranging it on an almost natural basis. Starting this time not from the Church, but from a certain humanism, it tries to demonstrate that human riches, when they are real, lead necessarily to religious truths which crown them by serving in some way as a keystone. Is it not against this kind of religious imperialism, if I may use the term, that Marxism has protested? To restore man to himself it refused to allow this almost automatic progress from the human to the divine, from the visible to the invisible. And on this point it was justified. Whether it be from above or from below, we cannot ourselves systematize this encounter between the human and the divine which always leads to the domination of the religious over the secular. We are in no way the masters of this alliance, but the witnesses of that which God concluded in Jesus Christ, true God and true man — which is very different. In this perspective let us remark in passing that secularism is probably a better field of action than compulsory and traditional Christianity.

Either to avoid this seizure of culture by faith, or on account of the hostility which might surround us, we should be tempted to adopt rather the first attitude — *isolation*. If we speak of an encounter, it is to be understood that we do not only envisage juxtaposition or coexistence, but a real exchange between two partners. Apart from the fact that this separation in which we withdraw into an ivory tower makes this contact well nigh impossible and multiplies misunderstandings, it has the serious drawback that it implies yielding to a movement which is the very reverse of the attitude which God took towards us. He came to serve us, He gave himself. He bore

our griefs, he suffered opposition. How can we withdraw, when he came among us? How can we stay on the side-lines when he came into the midst of his enemies to save them?

These two attitudes both being rejected, a third possibility immediately presents itself: *confusion*, so often practised between faith and science, revelation and culture, the holy scripture and psychology. It is the way of compromise and peace. Forgetting that this encounter, if it is to be valid, can only be the miracle of the Holy Spirit, we try to get it more cheaply by adapting the Word of God to culture. We will take a little of each and mix them together: a little of the philosophy of history, a little psychology or sociology, a little science and a little spirituality to balance. The chief converts of modern Protestantism invite us pressingly to follow this method. Have we not already seen the moralization, the historization, and the systematic humanization of faith? It is obviously the best way to get rid of tensions, provided always that the humanism of the moment will play the game, which happens less often nowadays. The two partners settle down together: faith becomes humanized, and culture idealized, psychology becomes religious, history becomes mystical, science flirts with mystery, the technologies construct their mythologies more or less impregnated, as Chesterton said, with Christian ideas gone mad. The fundamental theology of the Jesuits, apologetics, and the philosophy of religion, all favour these mixtures. The virtuosos in the art can get on with everybody; but they have one *bête noire*: the honest specialist or the evil spirit which resides in sobriety. One may become this enemy equally well from atheism as from faithfulness to the gospel. In both cases one will, in fact, prefer a virile encounter in the light to the ghosts of this half-darkness which emasculate both partners. Whoever forces the encounter is bound to come up against compromises of this kind.

We shall not be surprised to find that these three attitudes have already been condemned at the Council of Chalcedon, notably by the famous adverbs: *asugchutós*, without confusion; *atreptós*, without transformation; *adiairetós*, without division; *achôristós*, without separation. For when they were describing the relations between the two natures of Christ, the Fathers

necessarily had in mind all the other encounters between God and man, faith and works, Church and state, Church and culture, the spirit and the letter in scripture, etc. And why? Because this alliance in Jesus Christ is not only the pattern for all the others, but already contains them in itself. The discipline annunciated at Chalcedon is thus valuable for all the multiple implications of Christology and especially for the problem we are examining here. Encounter excludes all separation, without authorizing the slightest confusion.

*The God-man encounter — source of our instructions*

If we set ourselves now to find out what should be our correct behaviour, where shall we go for our instructions if not precisely to this God-man encounter, in which the Lord confronts his creation as both Master and Saviour and which is the best place for every meeting between him and us? Christology is concerned not only with him, but with us at the same time, so our witness is only of any value when it proclaims the mediation effected by God himself between the spirit and the flesh. Let us try then to discover what our active presence in the university might be and might produce, by starting from the very presence of God in this man. I shall try to do this by commenting briefly on three propositions.

- i. *In the act of his incarnation, God approaches man as his servant, to reconcile him to himself by revealing to him both his present situation and his future.*

We are not concerned here with an encounter between the Church and this man, member of the university or not, but between the Word of God, the Lord himself, with all flesh. So let us leave the Church and our own faith on one side for the moment God intervenes. He comes in person to meet these men. He takes the initiative, he attacks, he saves. His love is accomplished in this act, but his freedom too. He gives himself, but while remaining himself. Two attitudes are thus already excluded by this breaking-in of God: quietism

and secularization ; in other words, the refusal to intervene and the loss of oneself in this action.

The famous text of John 1 : 14 accentuates the word *egenetô* in order to underline the dynamic nature of this story : God is not flesh, he becomes it. He assumes it. He takes the burden of it upon himself. In the university, as elsewhere, we are witnesses of this action. I have been asked not to forget the essential evangelization among members of our academies. Let us say, in considering this first aspect, that all our action is evangelization, that is, taking part in this activity. God has come near to men, he is among them, having penetrated more deeply than they could themselves into their own problems, difficulties, and suffering. The distance between him and them has been covered. We are the signs of that event — nothing more, but we must be that, circulating in the corridors and in the different schools of our universities, rather like Hamlet at the court of Denmark : a secret has been entrusted to us, and it is this which henceforth governs our behaviour.

The word flesh designates man as a whole, including his culture, in the process of his history — and not only what there may be of perfection in the depth of his being, but his rebelliousness and his sin. Without taking part in it, Jesus takes upon himself the burden of this corruption, penetrating in this way into the uttermost depths of our distress, without fear or reserve and in complete solidarity with us. How could we be witnesses in the university to a truth only, to a dogma, to an explanation of the world, when this action has taken place ? We cannot put in its place our ideas or our religious feelings, our theology or our ecclesiastical institutions.

Let us pick out one of the features of this story. Man is herein approached with love, that is, in a positive manner, for his own good — not for the sake of his progressive improvement from the time of his sin onward, but for his renewal. For this purpose God must humble himself, and even hide himself, taking the form of a servant. His incognito, as the Christmas child and as the condemned man on Good Friday, surely calls for a similar disguise on our part, for a renunciation of the marks of our spiritual or ecclesiastical superiority. The encounter takes place from an equal or lower position,



on completely secular territory, which is the condition of real proximity. At the same time, this casting off of the trappings does not include the abandoning of one's real nature. While remaining firmly possessed of his divinity — how could it be otherwise? — God becomes secular and the humblest of all. Yet this humility does not imply diminution nor adaptation. Subordinationism in the doctrine of the Trinity, like kenosis in that of the Incarnation, has the disadvantage of presuming a collapse of the divinity because of its secularization — which leads to a weakening of our witness because of its incognito. Apologetics is a total consequence of these two heresies. On the other hand, if we must renounce every clerical and sacred attitude and become entirely secular, our faith must not suffer the slightest diminution. In other words, we are completely involved in our business without compromise or weakness, and for that very reason we are solidly with, and very close to, the men to whom we are sent.

In the very middle of our wisdom and our learning we are the witness of this action, of this sovereign presence and this real though secret assumption, and these are the first requirements which determine our conduct.

From the standpoint of the university, this irruption of God signifies at once a promise, a judgement, and a discovery : a promise of new life, a crisis in which idols are overthrown, and the discovery of a foundation and of an orientation unknown till now. Certainly this intervention may shake it, however sure it is of itself, but in order to renew it. Knowledge is not destroyed in this encounter, but despoiled, limited, and at the same time prodigiously stimulated to make a fresh leap forward. That is enough for the moment on this point.

2. *Jesus Christ, the risen one, is himself truth, knowledge, and understanding. Founded on him, we approach these men and their work to serve them with full assurance, with unshakable confidence, and yet without illusions.*

In the book of Proverbs, we read : "O ye simple, understand wisdom ; and ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart. Hear, for I will speak excellent things...for my mouth shall speak

truth... Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom. I am understanding." It is no small thing to be sent as the spokesman of wisdom, foolish as she may appear to many. If only we could lose our inferiority complexes at this point, as if religion spoke to the heart, leaving all freedom of action to sovereign reason. Does not wisdom cry in the streets, and would understanding have nothing further to say? Would the prophetic source have dried up? Obviously, our understanding and our ingenious solutions have nothing to do with it, nor our own self-assurance, since we are in a state of complete insecurity and threatened from all sides, but should we be so far from the wisdom of the scriptures that we should find nothing to say about all that troubles and disturbs the man of today? Sentinels in the university: we are a long way from that in our day! Liberty, justice, the protection of man, peace; and then methods: true objectivity, discipline in research, the very definition of truth; and again on the community of work, the bringing together of diverse lines of study; have we not an essential contribution to make here? Since we are not ashamed of the Bible, our voices should be heard on all these subjects which periodically come into the foreground of university life.

But our confidence comes above all from the victory which has been won over sin, blindness, and falsehood. We approach these people and their problems in the name of the risen Christ, knowing, moreover, that this event has not only an interior importance, but a global one. It concerns as much their intelligence as their soul, for if Jesus is truly risen, then all the axioms, all the principles, or to use the words of Leon Chestov, all the eternal truths which pass as the supreme criterion of truth, are challenged. Let me here report a conversation between Barth and one of his friends which he recounted in a lecture at Bièvres:

I shall tell you of a very small experiment which I made. I have a very good friend in Germany who is a very rigorous, very abstract philosopher, a mathematician, a logician, wholeheartedly devoted to modern physics. Formerly, a long time ago, he was a theologian; then he was converted to philosophy; then he became a mathematician. Forty years ago I was with him in Harnack's seminary in Berlin, later I met him at Münster in Westphalia. I have often discussed

theology and philosophy with him. Once he approached me with this question : "I think I understand what you are doing in your theological work. Yet I don't understand what is your real starting-point, the place where you begin to think, your axiom — for we mathematicians must always start from an axiom."

I answered, "Well, we have no axiom properly speaking ; I haven't one. But Christ is risen : that is the fact from whence I begin to think."

He replied, "Really ? Is Christ risen ? Do you understand that literally ?"

"Yes, literally."

"So then he is risen from the dead ?"

"Yes, he is risen from the dead."

"Bodily ?"

"Bodily."

"And that happened on earth, here in history ?"

"Yes, that happened ! That is my axiom ; it is with this fact — astonishing as it may appear — that I begin to think."

He replied — his first reaction : "This goes against all the laws of logic and physics and mathematics. But now I understand you."

From that moment he changed towards me. I know nothing — yes I do know a little — about his personal life, but in any case he has never again questioned the reason of my thought ; in any case he saw what was involved in Christian theology, because I simply said to him, "Christ is risen". Therefore, I had achieved real contact. Naturally all depends on what he is going to make of it. I had succeeded without theology, without dialectic, without any philosophy, simply saying this little sentence which every Russian peasant says to the other, "Christ is risen". He understood.

This is perhaps not an experiment which can be repeated. I quote it merely as an example because the whole gospel message, the whole Christian message, is in that assertion.

The resurrection is then not only a pious truth, but the starting-point of a reflection, the criterion of research, that lets one make contact with the other university disciplines, and calls them in question. It is from this point that the conceptions of man, of history, of life, of death, of the state, and of society are taken up. What happens when we really begin to think out these problems starting with this event ? I think that one of the essential aspects of our work at the university

consists simply in bringing into the open the often unconscious or hidden presuppositions on which the various disciplines are based. Technics have their axioms, but the sciences nearly all have their prejudices. The study of history depends largely on ready-made notions which people think they have acquired ; is not the same true of the doctrine of man, of morals, of the philosophy of science ? If we start from the resurrection, we can bring these secret requirements to light. Thus we penetrate to the heart of culture, touching the very structure of the university to test its foundations.

But our assurance and our confidence rest still on another aspect of the work of God. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is not only a new starting-point, but also an overwhelming result ; it produces a complete rehabilitation of man, and his total elevation. We are not pessimists, but optimists. These men and their works are already virtually saved, reconciled, raised up. Two important things must be clearly said here.

a) The dogma of *total depravity*, in its current sense, is not a good starting-point for making contact with our contemporaries. If man were totally depraved, he would no longer be man. On the contrary, he has kept most of the admirable qualities with which God has endowed him. But he does not know how to use them, either for God's sake or for his own good. It is the use of these faculties which is radically corrupt, but not these powers in themselves, although they have all the same suffered the effects of the fall.

In this sense we cannot approach the sciences and techniques of the university as though everything in them were valueless. Let us rather admire the skill which is there displayed, remembering all the time that they no longer achieve their ultimate purpose and that they are also partially disfigured. They are, however, still capable of mastering the vast empire of phenomena, without getting to the essence of things. In principle they could, but in practice they do not succeed. The Word of God comes to fill the void in the very heart of the most brilliant attempts. It alone can give meaning to our investigations without annulling them or replacing them, and it is our task, as theologians and as witnesses, to contribute to the filling of that gap.



b) In the second place, the elevation which is produced in the resurrection and the ascension of Jesus Christ succeeds to its own death. It is not an evolutionary flowering, but a judgement and an accomplishing. Let us leave the judgement on one side for the present, and fix our attention on this *rehabilitation*.

The gospel is a humanism, one might even say a culture, not in the sense of a totality which would be a substitute for the human disciplines, but because it establishes foundations and gives direction to research. Should we not deplore the fact that the Church so often practises such a skimpy, such an inadequately human humanism? And one is justly amazed that the dehumanization of a certain Protestantism has followed just that theology which put such strong emphasis on the humanity of Jesus. The reason is that it was done at the expense of his divinity, on the basis of a general anthropology. In reality the humanity of Jesus is precious solely because it is the humanity of the Son of God, the humanity that God willed at creation and that he puts on in its purity. The humanism of the gospel proceeds entirely from the perfections of the God whom it reflects. It has the same claim to be the object of revelation as divinity. For how could we reconstruct authentic humanity from the corruption in which we live? It is one of the functions of the dogma of mediation to show us who is God in this man, and who is the man proceeding from God.

This humanism is composed of a whole set of relationships between ourselves, God, and our neighbour, in justice, liberty, fraternity, solidarity, sobriety, and all kinds of virtues which concern not only the Christian, but by analogy, society as a whole. We are the spokesmen of this humanism, and, moreover, we are the witnesses in the measure in which we practise it, at least in part. One of the tasks of the Church in the university and in society is to show how it is possible to solve human problems starting from the gospel — and to do it not only through its exhortations but through its way of living. I think of the use of money, of personal discipline in the use of time, sexual life, and helping each other. Here comes in the whole system of analogies between the work of God, life

in community, in the imitation of Jesus Christ — “Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus” — and the order which should reign in the world. If it is to be right, our life and our works should correspond with the way God chose to behave to us. We discover from that the human constants for society as a whole. The true encounter between faith and culture is produced at this point. It is the privilege of the Church as a community, and not of the cleric only. Every believer penetrates his special subject of study, starting from the divine and human richness which is revealed to us in Jesus Christ, without making either confusion or separation. Moreover, he lives his university life like a parable of the communion which he has discovered in the Body of Christ. The importance of the Church asserts itself here: the university needs an active Christian community, and not only a few isolated witnesses.

On the subject of this new humanism, I cannot refrain from alluding to the Christological dogma which has often been considered the most abstract of all, and which yet commands the whole situation at this point. I mean anhypostasis and enhypostasis. The human nature of Christ does not in itself constitute an independent reality (anhypostasis with the privative a-) but depends entirely on the divine nature with which it forms a single person and from whom it receives its authenticity (which is indicated by the prefix en=in). Thus, this humanism of which we are speaking really derives its truth from its dependence on God. Liberty is only real in submission: works are good only as a product of faith: justice is the consequence of justification. We are not here on two juxtaposed planes, but in a close subordination. But we must add at once that liberty, responsibility, and even the autonomy of man become real precisely in this communion. Our works and all our conduct express henceforward our being in Christ, and it is thus that they become prophetic, in imitation and in acknowledgement.

In this action we are, however, without illusions, because the resurrection implies a *sentence of death*. We cannot practise a theology of glory. Contradictions, conflicts, and sufferings will not be spared us. The folly of God comes up against the wisdom of men, and since being “poor in spirit” is not a very

common virtue in the university — although it has been more so lately, especially among the scientists — this raising of a doubt will often provoke violent reactions. But how can we avoid them, if they are not only the consequences of our theological pride and of our incompetence? It is here that we must speak of a ministry associated with the sufferings of Christ and given in faith in his victory, in perseverance, and in the expectation of his return.

3. This last remark has brought us to our third proposition :  
*Since Jesus Christ has accomplished everything and will soon come again in glory, all things are already summed up in him and placed under his sovereign authority. For this cause creation groans and awaits his crowning, and we also groan in the hope of redemption.*

We live in this interim period, between the coming of the Saviour and his return. Although we are reassured by the power of the Spirit, our situation is fundamentally ambiguous. We do not see truth face to face, but indirectly and as through a veil. Not that it is obscure in itself, but because it is still hidden. We are saved in hope ; our life is hidden with Christ in God ; we love God without seeing him ; faith is the demonstration of things not seen, and what we see, we see only as in a glass darkly. The two aspects of this situation must be stated together : the light and the life are given, but they remain invisible. We advance in darkness, our eyes fixed on this invisible, sustained and nourished by the signs we are given of decisive victory, but at once limited and tested by the powers of darkness which continue to envelop the earth. Our life is a battle, not to win the victory which is already won, but to proclaim it when all visible realities seem to contradict it. "God has led me", said Luther at the end of his life, "like a blind horse". It is thus that we stand firm through his grace, in the dark night which advances upon us, as though we saw him who is invisible (Heb. 11 : 27).

A certain number of certainties support us on our way :

First, that all the impulses and all the forces of the human drama have already come to a head in Jesus, who takes them

on himself, and in whom they are all *recapitulated*. As a river flows into the sea, so history has already found in him its end and a new beginning. In him judgement is given and the victory is already won. His life has been an abridged life of humanity from its fall to his coming. Everything is in him, through him, and for him. Falsehood, hatred, disorder in all its forms, have ended in him to find their defeat in his death. In him the whole creation is re-established.

It is not our business then to bring about this coordination of human and divine truths ourselves. The synthesis is already achieved. We can believe it but not see it. Certain links are sometimes revealed to us as brilliant and fugitive intuitions, but our vision remains ever partial. We are thus neither the judges nor the masters of our culture. I mean by this that we cannot represent ourselves to the university as censors, but rather as companions. By our different routes and methods we are all on the way, and our first responsibility is to respect the exigences of our own particular subject. The encounter will be all the better if we are all about our own business. And in this community of work, theology has no right to put itself on a pedestal: it is human, like the other studies, the finest perhaps, but also the most dangerous.

Dominated by the reality of the "total Christ", who himself is the mediation between the truth of God and culture, and at the same time the only lever of a true encounter, we lay ourselves open to all the benefits which he grants us, whence-soever they may come. And we know that he uses unbelievers too, to show forth his glory. How many "non-Christian" riches there are in the history of painting, in the development of the sciences, and in literature. Even though strangers to the Church, they all secretly come back — in their weakness too — to the crucified and risen Christ who has taken them upon himself. All is ours, because all is Christ's, without any exclusion, but in gratitude for his marvels. Ingratitude is exclusive, but not gratitude.

Corresponding to this intellectual openness there is a human openness. To be human is to have one's fellow before one's eyes and to meet him with pleasure. Beyond the separations of individualism and the mixtures of collectivism, we practise



brotherliness and mutual trust : what the unbeliever lacks, as has been paradoxically said, is not so much Jesus Christ as the Holy Ghost who would make him recognize that he is already borne by his Saviour and presented to the Father. Let us stand beside him, under the authority of the same Lord, so that he may come to enjoy the benefits.

Openness and liberty, because Christ is the Lord of all, the Judge and the Saviour, and because we still walk in the darkness which veils our sight.

This attitude, compounded at once of faithfulness and brotherliness, of firmness and of open-heartedness, of truth and of charity, can only be the work of the Holy Spirit in us. That is why, in the time of hope, we must hold fast to our own treasure with decision and even intransigence. The Word of God is our life, our food, our strength, and the source of truth in our actions here and now. The methods we shall choose, apologetics, and even the will to conquer must yield to this first requirement ; the rest belongs to God, and let us trust the Spirit.

### *Encounter between the gospel and culture*

Perhaps you will reproach me for having talked too much about our attitude as Christians in the university, and not enough about culture in itself, or in relation to the Church. But are we not evangelists, and is not the essential problem that the gospel should be truly proclaimed and lived ? If we are faithful, the encounter will certainly take place, and in the right way. Otherwise we move among considerations which are abstract, and all the more inclined to be prudent because it is often in good taste in the university to neglect witness and to establish oneself in the field of theoretical and involved dissertations.

Let us try, however, to resume what we have learned about the effect which this encounter might have, if it took place, on culture properly so-called :

a) Culture would receive from the gospel the sense of her own necessity : the vocation of knowing has been given to man.

At the same time she would find her true orientation and the answer to many of her hesitations. Plunged in the study of phenomena, she would see herself again centred in the reality through the Word of God.

b) Then the gospel confronting her would question all her enterprises, not necessarily her techniques but her use of them, and all the extrapolations deduced from her discoveries. The vanity of the ideologies and of the mythologies with which she is surrounded would be laid bare. A judicious criticism of all these grand dreams, which are generally born in the universities and periodically change the course of history, would be one of the eminent services which our presence in this place could render to humanity as a whole.

c) Through this approval and this opposition, the gospel offers culture a new hope. For she also awaits, unknowingly, the coming of the new heaven and the new earth. She is never resigned to defeat and always moves forward again. When she no longer hopes in God, she uses all possible means to create reasons for hoping in spite of everything: in progress in the coming of the classless society, in scientific universalism, or the immortality of the soul.

d) Finally, the gospel can give to the university the sense of its own unity, in the common effort of the diverse specialized fields of study, wherein she may find the fullness of her vocation in the service of mankind.

All this depends essentially on our faithfulness and on our eagerness to give account of the one thing needful, in forms which are accessible to the young today. For this cause, let us be vigilant, alive to the signs of the times, and full of imagination in seeking this contact. Above all, let us pray with the psalmist :

O hold thou up my goings in thy paths :  
that my footsteps slip not.

I have called upon thee, O God, for thou shalt hear me.

Ps. 17 : 5-6.

## Some Problems of the Church in Asia

BEN BAVINCK, LEWIS JULIAN, and RALPH PERSON

This article has two serious limitations: (1) its authors have been in Asia for only a short period of time, and (2) their experience is limited to South India and Ceylon. The only possible excuse for its being written is that it may help others who come as fraternal workers to Asia and are struck by the same problems. If you are prepared to put up with these severe limitations, then read on.

### *The relationship of mission and Church*

One of the first problems that a young missionary becomes aware of in Asia is that of the relationship between mission and Church. Space forbids that we spend a great deal of time proving that this is a problem. Let us take only two examples. Between 1945 and 1950 about sixty per cent of the missionaries who had come to India during that period quit the field. Some, of course, attribute this to natural causes such as the restrictive policy of the government, the inability to fit into an alien culture, etc. Such causes did play their part, but one must also take seriously the reasons that the missionaries themselves give. Some of these are: not being given some really significant work to do, conflict with nationals over the administration of money, not feeling wanted, etc.

What is the nature of the relationship between mission and Church? It is usually described by the word *devolution*. Devolution refers to a process whereby the mission seeks gradually to turn over all of its work to the Church. At the end of the process it is hoped that the churches of the East will be self-supporting, self-propagating, and self-governing. Most of us would agree that this is a worthy goal. Why then should we call this relationship a problem?

The basic problem can be stated in this way. After 150 years of missionary activity and the spending of many millions

of dollars, the missionary enterprise has grown into a vast organization of schools, hospitals, and churches. Thus the question arises: how does an organization as powerful as the modern missionary enterprise turn its work over to another organization, the Church, which is not nearly as powerful and which cannot possibly support so vast an organization? This question is full of explosive implications; especially when it is read against the background of nationalism which resents most things Western, the charge of missionary imperialism which is so much resented in the West, the revival of national culture in the East, the natural abhorrence that any man has in asking for money, etc. We cannot go into all of these background questions here, important as they are. We are convinced, however, that part of the problem lies in the fact that the implications of devolution are not sufficiently understood either by mission or Church.

Devolution implies, first of all, that we are dealing with *two* entities. In the early days of missions the relationship could be described as that between the mission board and its representatives on the field. That is to say, there was only *one* organization with many branches around the world. Thus there was really no problem of relationship. Today, on the other hand, there are two organizations — mission and Church.

Secondly, it has not been sufficiently realized that in this situation we must take seriously the problem of power. Mission and Church both represent *hard organizational structures*. Each has a constitution and a constituency of its own. That means that no individual can change the structure or make decisions purely on the basis of his own feelings. To say, as some do, that the representatives of either organization are "hard hearted" or "unsympathetic" is to show that we do not understand the "system". Furthermore, this hard organizational structure implies that each has certain resources of its own; each has certain rights and privileges of its own; each, and this is very important, has an integrity of its own, and that integrity must not be violated by the other. This means, for example, that mission boards should not make decisions about new work without consulting the Church on the matter.



Thirdly, devolution implies that this is not a relationship between equals. That is to say, the mission is more powerful than the Church, not in any spiritual sense, of course, but in the sense that it has more financial resources. This is where the really serious difficulty comes in. How is the Church to receive money and yet maintain its integrity, and how is the mission to give and yet not dominate?

How are problems solved in this relationship? Let us say, for example, that we have the problem of the place of the missionary in India today. How shall it be dealt with? At this point both mission board and national Church think almost instinctively in terms of *strategy*: how to handle the problem diplomatically and organizationally. "We have our own feelings, but we must be willing to compromise." There is give and take, and once a decision is reached, then it is put into effect through the proper organizational channels.

If we may be allowed to depart from our avowed task of stating the problem, we would like to say that we do not feel that this is the right way to deal with problems of relationship. Instead of dealing with them in terms of strategy we should deal with them in terms of *God's call*. That may mean, it probably does mean, that most of the time we are asking the wrong questions. When we deal with problems in terms of strategy, then we deal with each one individually, and each one becomes a mountain in itself. The question is not, "What should our financial policy be?", or "What is the place of the missionary?"; the question is rather, "What is God calling his people to do in the churches of Asia today?". If we can answer this question, then the others will take their rightful subordinate places and people will not fight, bleed, die, and leave the mission field over minor problems. Strategy must be determined in terms of God's call and not *vice versa*, and compromise can have no place when we are trying to discover God's will. To deal with problems in terms of strategy leads to cynicism such as we find in the realm of international politics today. We must realize that we are dealing with power structures, but we must also realize that their power is derived from the same source — God's power.

*The challenge of Hinduism*

Another problem confronting the Church in the East is the resurgence of non-Christian religions. We will speak of Hinduism here because it is the only one with which we are familiar. Hinduism presents the Christian Church with three challenges. They can best be understood in terms of three examples. Not long ago a Hindu leader was reported to have said, "We will put a statue of Jesus Christ in every Hindu temple, and then no Hindu will feel the need of becoming a Christian." The first challenge is thus a theological one. The genius of Hinduism is its ability to absorb other ideologies and faiths, and thus the Church is presented with the problem of syncretism. One cannot say that the Church has any clear answer to the challenge, but more and more books of an apologetic nature are appearing.

The second example comes from the town of Tirruputti, India, which is a Hindu place of pilgrimage. To understand the significance of what is happening there you must go to the houses built for the pilgrims to live in and not to the temples. They have been built with the question of sanitation very much in mind. There is plenty of fresh air and light, the floors are clean, and medical facilities have been provided. This is symbolic of something that is happening within Hinduism today: it is developing a social conscience. Christian missionaries in the past pointed to social issues a great deal in their efforts to prove the superiority of Christianity over Hinduism. But a socially backward Hinduism is not the Hinduism that confronts the Church today.

How is the Church dealing with this problem? There are some in the Church today who say rather bitterly, "The Hindus have stolen their advanced social ideas from us." We do not feel that this should be resented. We should, rather, rejoice that we have made our point that God cares for the needy, and see in the situation a call to make our witness in a new way. We must now go back to the centre of our faith — the Cross — and interpret it in the light of the present situation. Not to do so is to encourage the belief that we have nothing to offer but a social gospel.

The third challenge is a cultural one, and it is symbolized by the new university that was built in Tirruputti five years ago *by the temple authorities*. The university is devoted to a re-examination of the cultural foundations of India's life, and to a renewal of national life in terms of these foundations. Thus it is eager to cooperate with the government in its schemes of national uplift and to supply an ideological foundation for such schemes. It is dedicated to the proposition that Hinduism is India's special heritage, and it can be quite militant in its attitude towards Christianity. Thus Hinduism challenges the Church to become a real part of the life of India, and to take part in the efforts to build a better India.

What is the Church doing to meet this third challenge? Very little, it would seem. Culturally and politically the Church tends to be an outsider in India and Ceylon. There are some exceptions, however. The Orthodox and Mar Thoma Churches in South India are nearly two thousand years old and are very much a part of India's heritage. Another example is that of the Committee for the Study of Religion and Society which has a two-pronged emphasis—the study of Hinduism and the study of social and political issues in the light of the Christian faith.

### *The problem of indigenization*

The cultural challenge that Hinduism presents to the Christian Church raises the whole problem of indigenization. It is undoubtedly true that for Christianity to be a vital force in the East it must be of the soil of the East and not something imported from the West. On the other hand, there are serious problems in actually accomplishing this. The main problem is the fact that the culture is not Christian. The Church must be of the soil of the East, but in the main that soil is Hindu or Buddhist. The ways of thinking, the institutions, the art forms—all of these are non-Christian in their origin. Thus the question arises: can the Christian accept and use these things, or is there any sense in which the nature of Christianity excludes their use? In this dilemma the Church has three alternatives. It can reject the culture and remain Western,

but then it will be an isolated communal group. Secondly, it can accept and baptize with the idea of trying to deepen and purify, but then there is the danger that the Church may lose her identity. Thirdly, she can produce something that is not Western but not Hindu or Buddhist either, something that will be of the soil of the East but does not accept the forms or institutions of other religions. This is, of course, the most difficult alternative. It should be remembered, however, that even this third alternative will be misunderstood by non-Christians. Nationalism allows only one possibility, and that is to follow the cultural heritage of India. Not to do so, even if the Church does not copy the West, will be regarded with suspicion.

It is at this point that we become acutely aware of the second major obstacle to indigenization : the cultural challenge is loaded with political implications. Hinduism challenges the Church to take part in nation-building activities. This the Church must do. If it claims to have a gospel for the whole man, then it must speak and act in the political sphere. On the other hand, the Church is under divine compulsion to refuse to worship and serve false gods. Thus conflict in the political sphere is inevitable.

What is the Church doing to become indigenous ? Most Westerners are disappointed when they come to the East. They may have heard one of the East's brilliant preachers speak and had their imagination set on fire ; then they come here and find that after all the Church is beset with the same sins in the East as it is in the West, and that there is no beehive of activity with regard to indigenization. But before we let disappointment dull our senses, we should stop and ask ourselves one question : what are we looking for ? Are we perhaps looking for things which only Western eyes see, and are we missing the really significant things that are happening ? The Christian East has not produced any indigenous form of systematic theology. On the other hand, there are signs that some indigenization is occurring in the field of church architecture, worship, and art. Yet even these may not be as significant as the indigenization that is taking place in personal Christian life. The East has always provided two separate



modes of life — one for the religious and one for the non-religious man — and has distinguished them sharply. The religious man of the East as represented by the sadhu and sannyasi has a strong leaning towards mysticism and asceticism. There is a tendency in Christianity to preserve this distinction. The Christian minister, for example, must give some visible sign of austerity or he is simply not considered to be capable of fulfilling his office.

### *The problem of evangelism*

There are many aspects to the problem of evangelism. We want to draw attention here to only two because they are perhaps the first to strike the attention of the young missionary when he comes to Asia. The first of these is the effect of communalism on evangelism. The churches of India and Ceylon have been formed, in the main, from one caste group or strata of society. Coupled with this is the fact that Christian missions, from the beginning, placed strong emphasis upon raising the economic and educational level of their converts. Often to become a Christian meant that one could gain employment in one of the many jobs offered by the mission, and in every case it meant that the children of the Christian would be given an education. In Ceylon this only tended to strengthen an already existing position because the converts were drawn from the upper castes. In India it created an entirely new situation because there a large number of the new converts were from the low castes and Christianity raised their position. In both cases the result has been a church that hastened to organize itself in order to propagate itself, numerically and economically, and to preserve its privileges. We do not say that it is a bad thing to offer new converts an opportunity for advancement. Rather, we can see in it Jesus Christ's concern for the welfare of his people. Yet too often the Christian community has seen this opportunity as one of privilege instead of service. Therefore, it has become a thing which must be protected from outsiders. Evangelism becomes a threat to security.

This kind of thing is not only bad for evangelism ; it is also bad for the Christian community itself because it creates

a false fellowship. There is no sense of being together *for Christ's sake*.

There are two significant signs that this problem is being faced by the Church. The first is the movement towards church union that has resulted in the Church of South India. Following what has been said above, it may be thought that these unions are in the nature of a fearful huddling together. The observable facts, however, show that this is not so. The movement bears the strong marks of an adventurous faith and foresight, and obedience of God's summons, rather than a marriage of convenience.

The other sign is the ashram movement that is giving new meaning to the subject of Christian fellowship.

The second problem of evangelism is the shortage of ordained workers needed to carry on an effective program of evangelism. The problem in Ceylon is not so acute as in India. In India laymen are often used effectively as evangelists, but the problem arises because there are not enough men to baptize and administer communion. We have heard recently of a case in which a village of several hundred people wanted to be baptized, but this request was left unanswered for months because there was no one to go and baptize them. One also hears of congregations going for months without communion. Undoubtedly it is true that not enough young men are going into the ministry. But there is another side to the question. Are we really making use of the men we have got? There are many dedicated men working full-time as evangelists in India who are not permitted to administer sacraments because they have not had sufficient education to be ordained. Why must they have so much education before they can administer sacraments? We tell people to put away their gods and make Jesus Christ the centre of their lives. We say that he will create a new life in them. Then because we are not willing to ordain men who have been working effectively among them for years, we deny them the sacraments and make it as difficult as possible for Christ to enter and change their lives. We cut them off from the means of grace.

We have heard of only one experiment aimed at solving this problem. It is taking place in the Madurai diocese of

the Church of South India. There six men with little previous education are being put through a course of theological training in the actual villages where they are working. It is hoped that they will be ordained at the end of three years. It has taken several years to convince the diocese to take this step, and there is still some opposition.

### *The challenge of Pentecostalism*

Perhaps one of the most important questions we must answer in the future is what to do about the challenge of Pentecostalism. There have always been such groups in the history of the Church, but the new fact of our time is their great numbers. In many places they are the fastest growing of all the churches, and one begins to wonder if in the next one hundred years they may not exceed the Protestant churches in membership. The first challenge of Pentecostalism is, of course, the fact that it is "stealing" members from the established churches. In order to stop this one minister has begun to have weekly testimony meetings in his church. He has lost only two or three members since then.

But the real challenge of Pentecostalism goes much deeper than that: it challenges the Church to take seriously the meaning of *life in the Spirit*. At least one Indian bishop has said that the greatest task confronting the Indian Church is that of reclaiming the meaning of that phrase. Space does not permit us to treat this subject in detail. We would suggest two lines of questioning that need to be followed. (1) Are we not bound too much by eighteenth-nineteenth century forms of pietism in giving expression to the Christian faith? (2) Is not Protestantism in danger of making Christianity a Jesus-religion, forgetting that in Christ we meet the triune God and that we only know the Son through the power of the Holy Spirit?

### *The problem of pessimism or defeatism*

This problem is rather nebulous and hard to define. It would perhaps be more likely to strike an American than anyone else. America is a land of optimism. That is part of

its cultural heritage dating back to the days of frontier expansion when no man had to face failure since he could always go west and begin a new life. It is also a natural expression of American national life at this point in her history when prosperity is so general. Americans tend to feel that there is no problem that cannot be solved if they are given time ; it does not even have to be a long time. An American coming to Asia would naturally think in this way : "The problem is to win these lands for Christ. This surely can be achieved if we simply apply our minds to working out a method and then set about the task with gusto."

It is thus surprising to Americans to find in Asia so little optimism. What they would call pessimism or defeatism is more likely to be the prevalent mood. This mood runs through all of the thinking and activity of the East. The Indian is likely to feel, "It does not seem to be God's will that this happen now." The American would assume that it was God's will and his own fault if it did not come about.

Possibly two things contribute to this mood of the Eastern Christian. One is the fact that he lives in an atmosphere of fatalism which is created by Hinduism and Buddhism, and has naturally been influenced by this outlook. Another cause may be the fact that the Church, being a minority group, has developed a minority psychology that is more defensive than offensive in nature. The Church obviously does not feel that this is a problem, but it is fair to ask the question : is not a certain amount of optimism necessary if we are to go forward ? Is it not imperative that we as Christians be optimistic in the sense that we believe we can do all things through Christ ?

### *The danger of outwardness*

There is a real danger in the East of religion becoming a completely outward thing. For the Church in a Hindu environment this outwardness gets easily focused on two points : morality and ceremonies. First of all Christianity is reduced to the proposition, "Be good", and people are admonished from pulpits and teachers' chairs to live a good life. But if morality becomes the focal point of the individual Christian



life, then ceremonies become the focal point of the corporate life of Christians. Every building must be opened with ceremonial Bible reading and prayers (even a sports pavillion). Often one has the impression that the fact of the ceremony having been held or attended means more than really having participated in and understood what was being said and done in the ceremony: *vide*, the tongue-twisting speed with which liturgical prayers and other forms of liturgy can be dealt with.

A personal encounter with the living Lord who leads us into his Kingdom and so into an absolutely new kind of life does not get much chance where morals and ceremonies have such a predominance. Furthermore, it makes a Christian witness impossible, because there is certainly no necessity to witness about good morals and ceremonies to Hindus who on their part will gladly accept Jesus Christ as an inspired teacher.

What is the Church doing to meet this problem? There is some awareness of danger on both of these points. Two things in particular are being done to counter them. First, better theological training for ministers has done much to discredit the idea that Christianity and morality are synonymous. The problem of ceremonies is being dealt with by a new concern in the Church to make liturgy more meaningful. The Church of South India, for example, has introduced a choral liturgy for the communion service in which Tamil music is used throughout.

### *The problem of materialism*

The distinction between the materialistic West and the religious East has lost much of its meaning. As the material blessings of modern civilization spread, they seem to have succeeded in awakening in the soul of the East a violent longing for possession of earthly goods. Often it looks as if materialism, especially among the educated or partly educated classes, is more powerful than in the West. One of the great problems which the Church has to face, therefore, is that of awakening a sense of Christian vocation and values. At present it seems that with regard to the choice of a profession the most decisive question which is being asked is: how much money will it

bring me ? In most cases the young people are not to be blamed too much as it is the parents who generally make these decisions for them, and for the parents a good position, honour, and a good salary or dowry are the determining factors in their care for their child. The fact that it is nearly impossible to get Christian doctors for a mission hospital, since the pay is less than the government offers, points this out. One is forced to conclude that the connection between faith and the everyday questions of life is only dimly seen. Religion often remains a religion of the inner room, even for those to whom it is more than morality and ceremonies and to whom communion with the Lord Jesus Christ is a living reality. It is not the kind of religion which develops new and challenging attitudes in social and political life.

The ashram movement is one attempt to deal with the problem of materialism and to challenge the Church to think again about the meaning of Christian vocation. The danger is that the Church may feel relieved of its responsibility because the ashrams are doing it.

# Problems of Church Mission in Africa Today

JOHN KAREFA-SMART

Africa today is a continent in ferment, and the Christian Church is of necessity involved in this ferment. Not only as an institution within society is the Church affected by all the rapid social change which is taking place, but it can also be said that the Church has been a major contributor to the underlying causes of the ferment.

The Christian gospel was, generally, brought to Africa as a result of the great missionary movement of the last, and the early years of the present, century. The sequence of events has normally been the preaching of the gospel by the missionary, the establishment of a local fellowship of converts centred around a mission station, the development of outlying centres of evangelism into "mission churches", and the gradual devolution of responsibility for the life and work of the Christian congregations from the "foreign missionary" to indigenous African pastors.

The gospel usually meant not only the announcement of the good news about redemption from the power of sin through the mediation of the Lord Jesus, but also a practical emancipation from illiteracy, through mission schools, and from disease, through the mission dispensary and hospital, as well as an opportunity to share in the various forms of the culture from which the missionary came. This marriage of a liberating gospel and of a culture which exemplified fuller living gave to Africans the first vision of what a full life could be and what they themselves might become. It is the result of the seeds thus sown which gives meaning to the often heard assertion that the ferment in Africa today can largely be blamed on the Christian Church.

The processes of devolution referred to above have progressed at differing speeds in different parts of Africa, but the discussion which follows is meant to apply as well to churches

which are still almost entirely under the control of non-African missionary leaders as to churches which have almost completely assumed control of their own affairs under African leadership.

### *The problem of relevance*

It may be said without much fear of contradiction that among the most serious problems concerning the mission of the Church in Africa today is the problem of "relevance". The gospel which the early missionaries preached and exemplified in their lives achieved results because what they said and did was relevant to African life as they found it. The gospel brought "deliverance to captives, sight to the blind and light to them that sat in darkness". Today the emergent peoples who are determined to shake off the yoke of colonialism, of economic exploitation, and of "white supremacy" look, almost in vain, for the good news which will do for them what the Christian teaching about, for example, there being in Christ "no Greek nor Jew" did to nullify inter-tribal animosities. To one who has decided to liberate himself there can be no relevance in a message which teaches that it is a good thing to remain in subjection.

It is not yet clearly seen in most parts of Africa that the attitudes and relationships between missionary and indigenous leaders of the Church, far from being as between brothers in Christ, so closely resemble those between the colonial authorities and the nationalist leaders that people tend to regard the Church as an ally of the government or as merely another manifestation of Western power. Leaders of the nationalist movements, therefore, even though their own education and inspiration came to them through early connections with the missions, now often have to look elsewhere than the Church for continued inspiration and support in their goal of achieving self-determination for their people.

The apparent irrelevance of what the Church stands for is also evident in other areas of life apart from politics. There is too little evidence of any Christian message that can be applied to problems of workers as they seek advancement in the face of horizontal ceilings which limit how far they may



rise up the industrial or commercial ladder. Also, in situations in which inter-racial ill-feeling is almost about to erupt into violence, the Church in East and Central Africa often prefers to look the other way.

### *The minority problem*

Another serious problem is the "minority" problem. Although in a few places, notably in West Africa, Christians are able to fill a role far in excess of their numerical strength, yet the fact remains that the whole body of Christians is in a minority nearly everywhere. In the colonial days which are passing away, this did not seem to matter very much, because the colonial powers were at least nominally Christian themselves. But what is going to happen to the Christian minority when national independence is achieved? The fate of the Christian Church will then depend on how much strength it has acquired from its own inner life as a united community. The orientation of Christian congregations is often at present so Western that, when financial and administrative links with the West are severed, as they will inevitably have to be, the indigenous Church might find that its roots have not yet been accustomed to draw enough nourishment from the native soil to keep the church alive and healthy.

### *The problem of Islam*

The growing appeal of Islam is another problem which must be faced by the Church in Africa. As already stated above, the strength of Islam may at present not be fully realized because of the false protection of nominally Christian colonial governments. The churches must have a clear understanding of such questions as religious freedom, and the separation of Church from state if, in the future, in the absence of the support of external authority, they have to take a stand as a minority group. If the Lordship of Christ over the Church and the world means anything in this context, it should mean that the Church will not be afraid to see its present protectors, namely the metropolitan governments, go away. If Christ is Lord when the British or the French are in charge of govern-

ment, he must also remain Lord when government policy is dictated by a Muslim or even animist majority in a house of representatives.

### *The ecumenical problem*

Another problem might be termed the "ecumenical" problem. The living fellowship which is the Church is a world-wide fellowship. No experience of this fellowship can be said to be completely satisfying along strictly denominational lines. Yet here and there one sees attempts almost to "protect" African mission congregations from inter-denominational contacts. It is one thing to know that there are fellow Methodists or fellow Lutherans in China or in Peru. It is quite another thing to experience the "bonds in Christ" between Baptists in Sierra Leone and Anglicans in Australia. A heavy responsibility in this connection rests upon the missionary leaders. They have the keys in their hands to open doors between the many rooms which are in the Father's house so that there will be full and free fellowship in Christ. No less a responsibility, of course, rests on those African Christians who have had the good fortune, usually through the generosity of Christians abroad, of sharing in this experience of the world-wide Church. He who has seen the light and prefers to hide it under a bushel is as much under judgement as he who has failed to light a lamp in the darkness.

Closely related to the problem of opportunity for ecumenical experience is, of course, the problem of the divided Body of Christ. I can think of no greater indictment for which a Christian missionary or an indigenous pastor is answerable than the charge that, in his concern to build a church among his converts, he has contributed further to the divisions in the Body of Christ. On the other hand, there is always the glorious opportunity for the creation of a United Church of Christ in most countries of Africa which are far removed from the historical, cultural, and theological reasons which originally contributed to the divisions of the Church in Europe and in America, but which need not be perpetuated out of their context here in Africa.

*The Church and society*

Finally, there is the dilemma which must always be faced by the Church, in Africa as elsewhere. The Church is called, at one and the same time, to judge society and to be so involved in society as to hope to transform it and save it. In most of Africa today this dilemma means that the Church must fearlessly hold up before the leaders both of colonial governments and of nationalist movements the ethical and moral standards of the Lord of the Church, condoning nothing which is a compromise with evil or which reflects injustice, while at the same time it also prepares and sends its members, as individuals and as a group, into the very middle of changing society. Christians have, long ago, earned for themselves the reputation of "those who turn the world upside down". This process of upheaval may lead to redemption or it may lead to catastrophe. The redeemed society, whose creation is the primary mission of the Church, may only come about after an active destruction of any forces which tend to deprive men and women of the right to live their fullest, and after a complete removal of any injustice in personal or group relationships between men, whether in their political, economic, or social lives. The Lord of the Church came that men "might have life and have it more abundantly".

# AMERICAN TRAVEL DIARY

MAURICIO LOPEZ

## PART I

On a cold autumn night — the calendar marked November 10 — I left Geneva bound for the Americas on my first journey as secretary of the Federation. I had been appointed by the General Committee which met in Tutzing, Germany. Then followed a period of work and study in Rue Calvin, where with avid interest I did my best to understand the rich and ample life of the Federation, and with an open mind — I call on Philippe Maury as witness — I gave myself wholeheartedly to the affectionate fellowship of the members of the staff, and to the mapping out of the almost unknown field of my future labours. The uncertainty common to whoever initiates a new undertaking was made easier in my case due to the fact that I was following in the steps of Valdo Galland, who had done a really excellent work in Latin America.

### *Skyscrapers on the horizon*

I arrived in New York after a long night jump across the Atlantic, and it was the middle of the morning when we reached Idlewild, the immense international airport whose final contours are not yet completed. Herluf Jensen, General Secretary of the USCC, was there to meet me with his characteristic smile of welcome and ready to make allowances for the incurable imperfections of my basic English. North Americans understand the secrets of life in relationship so that it is easy from the beginning to maintain direct and friendly communication with them. Herluf was a great help during my stay in New York, and through him I was able to get to know something of those wonderful organisms, the famous North American mission boards, generous contributors to the Federation. These boards combine with their high administrative efficiency a keen Christian spirit that makes their influence felt to the uttermost parts of the earth. For me this is a symptom of the revival in belief and practice which brings religion before the minds and will of people in a way which reminds us of the times of their devout early colonizers. Statistics prove that three out of every five people in the States belong to some Christian church and meet in temples that reflect in their lines and structure the



freshness and vitality of this modern spiritual movement. We do not ignore the fact that certain religious leaders fear that this renewed interest in Christianity is only an expression of a worldly worship of security without facing up to the greater challenges of our faith. But these doubts and the willingness to formulate such questions are in themselves signs of the vigour of present-day Christianity and of its capacity for further expansion.

I was only four days in New York. One afternoon I attended a session of the General Assembly of the United Nations on the occasion of the debates over the Hungarian question, which at that time affected so keenly the subject of world peace. I got the impression of a great stage where world figures dialogued as roughly as they could according to certain roles established beforehand. Behind the scenes they knew without doubt how far they could go in their mutual concessions.

Leaving behind the excitement and dynamic life of that political hub of the modern world which is New York at the present time, the plane took me without a stop to Mexican lands.

### *The feathered serpent*

It is not a mere trick of tourist propaganda to say that Mexico is one of the most attractive countries of the world. It is sufficient to indicate its physical structure, its historical vicissitudes, and its human profile in order to substantiate such an affirmation. In the first place, nature there is a repertoire of sub-lunar geography. It combines an enormous variety of birds and flowers, lands which stretch from the arid desert to happy valleys that speak of an earthly paradise, gigantic woods and warm earth, fields of pitas and palms fed with torrid sap, together with places of desolation and misery. In such physical surroundings strange indigenous civilizations — such as the Aztecs with their fascinating ceremonies of vampire gods which demanded the blood of millions of slaves — have arisen and disappeared rather mysteriously. The arrival of the Spaniards destroyed less than is usually believed. Slavery, deprived of its mystical motives, was dedicated to the pursuit of silver and gold, gods less honourable, it is true, than the feathered serpents, but at the same time less criminal. The age of metal and the catechism gave way later to the turbulent era of the revolver, indispensable arbitrator in the struggles between ambitious generals and liberal lawyers. This period of adventure now belongs to legend. Those rebellious and brave men have been followed by an army of school teachers and social legislators.

I arrived in Mexico in the evening twilight. An unforgettable spectacle of thousands of lights from the gigantic metropolis was visible from the air. The airport, which admirably fulfils its business function, possesses a solid architectural beauty. The monotonous routine of customs is relieved by a good cup of coffee offered to those just arrived. I had no difficulty in obtaining a comfortable hotel in the heart of the city — thanks to the good offices of the taxi-driver through whom I was able to avoid the rigour of the *mordida* (bite), the Mexican way of saying "to pay through the nose". The following day, November 15 to be exact, I went to the head office of the Student Christian Movement in a street which bears the name of a virtuous Mexican educationist called Justo Sierra. There I got to know the secretary of the SCM, Professor Abraham Alfaro, who was to be my inseparable companion during the rest of my stay.

Our visit to Mexico, as also to the countries of Central America, had for its principal object to give the finishing touches to the preparation of two leadership training courses, similar to those already held by the Federation in other places in Latin America. The activity displayed by Abraham Alfaro and the advisory committee of the SCM simplified to a great extent my task. I conserve grateful memories of the great efforts of many friends, and especially of Edwin Rosser of the Presbyterian Mission, in repairing and preparing the place for our conference in a district of the capital called Villa Obregon.

Visits to different churches and religious leaders took up a fair part of our time. Our purpose was to obtain student representations from the leading university cities of the country as also from the largest possible number of Evangelical denominations, and for that reason we made two rapid incursions into the interior which took us to Toluca and Puebla respectively. Toluca is in the centre of a very rich agricultural zone peopled by the Otami Indians, whose craftsmanship still employs the technique of the times of Cortes. There we were able to converse with the Rev. Jose Luis Velasco, whom we had already invited to be one of the speakers at our conference, and also with Rev. Fidel Ramirez of the Methodist Church, who is very interested in work among students. A new SCM group has just been started in this city. Puebla de los Angeles is a very Spanish city which still seems to be enjoying its colonial sleep, in spite of modern motor cars that cross its streets and the profusion of television sets on every hand. It is a provincial city with beautiful buildings of plateresco and baroque style, adorned with their famous polychrome tiles bathed in the clear light of a soft blue sky. There we entered into contact with the student group of the Methodist

Church under the leadership of Professor Baez on what happened to be graduation day, the main speech for the occasion being pronounced by Manuel Flores. Our contacts were not sterile, and today the directory of the Federation includes a SCM group in Puebla whose life has received fresh inspiration from the Mexican courses. We were also able to visit the United Evangelical Centre and the Lutheran Seminary, and our invitation was hospitably received in both places. We cannot forget that our Mexican conference included for the first time a section dedicated especially to students of theology.

The enormous extent of Mexico City — an area of more than 1,300 square kilometres — makes getting from one district to another somewhat difficult. However, a walk through its streets has charms of its own. Mexico is a city of four centuries of varied history which still impose their presence in the physiognomy of the town. The relics of the past live side by side with high skyscrapers which demonstrate the originality and dynamics of the modern structures of the city. It is a city of contrasts in which one passes imperceptibly from the rich to the poor, from the ancient to the modern, from the rudimentary to the comfort of modern technology. Notwithstanding, it preserves the charm of a colonial city reflected in the idiosyncrasies of the Mexican who refers everything to *mañana*, to the sweet bye-and-bye, as a kind of refuge from the roaring mastery of mechanics and from the strong demands of the present day. Finally, we visited the university city of Mexico, a magnificent realization within the world of Ibero-American culture and an expressive symbol of the originality, capacity for synthesis, and creative power of Latin America. I had been nine days in Mexico; my itinerary indicated other horizons. On November 24 I left for a long flight to Panama with various stops on the way.

### *The volcanic stretch*

*Panama, November 24-28*

The plane arrived during the night at the airport of Tocumen, "one of the most beautiful in the world" according to official information. The customs officials were very understanding and within a few minutes I found myself free to greet Rev. Charles Butler and Professor Mario Beckles who had come to meet me. With them I made my way to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Fiske, where I was well cared for. The following day, a Sunday, I had the opportunity of speaking in the morning service of the Methodist church of Wachapali, a very poor neighbourhood. An ardent and moist heat made itself felt everywhere. With the missionary we made visits to homes

near the temple and invited the people to the services. In the street you could hear the murmur of a thousand voices. On all hands heaps of people, promiscuity, and misery. It is an example of tropical poverty more tolerable and milder than that of our big cities. With very little one can keep body and soul together. Nobody replies in the negative to our desire to see them at church ; nobody responds either. As I think of the missionaries, Mr. and Mrs. Butler, I thank God that there are such Christians with such selfless love for the poor and the desire to preach to them the unsearchable riches of Christ.

In the afternoon of the same day we travelled to El Pedregal some eighteen kilometres from the capital. On the way we made a quick survey of the ruins of old Panama which, according to the chronicles of the seventeenth century, were considered superior to those attributed to Cipango by Marco Polo. The city was plundered and destroyed by the English pirate, Henry Morgan, in 1671. We saw with admiration St. Jerome's tower, the royal bridge, and something of the lay-out of the streets as the last remains of that disaster.

The church of El Pedregal left a deep impression on me. A congregation composed largely of the humble poor listened very attentively to the message. Their pastor, Don Pedro Barbero, came some twenty-five years ago from Spain to work as a journalist. The reading of the Bible which he had bought in his native land moved him to accept Christ as Saviour and to become a member of an Evangelical church. Today he is a loved and respected leader. That same Sunday I had the opportunity of addressing a group of young people with a fair sprinkling of students among them in the church of El Malecon. I spoke to them of the responsibility of Christian youth in the present day. It is a group which shows great promise of development and has in Mario Beckles an excellent collaborator. From outside came the restful murmur of the ocean waves. It was full tide with that rhythm of Panama tides which is among the most pronounced of such phenomena in the whole world.

The following day, in company with its director, L. M. Fiske, I visited the Panama Institute, considered to be one of the best educational centres in the country. It possesses a building recently finished that has incorporated the most modern improvements for carrying on its teaching tasks. I must mention the predominance given in this school to religious education. When I arrived one could still capture the echoes of the spiritual messages given by Rev. Rodriguez Hidalgo, rector of the seminary of Matanzas, Cuba, which provoked a great reaction and religious awakening among a large



proportion of the students. As a result of these meetings various groups of students were formed to study the Bible and to deepen their devotional life ; I was able to have several meeting with them and also to give a message in the classes of philosophy directed by Mrs. Butler. I emphasize this happy event in view of the repercussions it may have towards the formation of a nucleus of the SCM in Panama. Student work has had many difficulties up till now. The main factor is the very limited number of Evangelical students in the university, who at times may be counted on the fingers of one hand. Some continue their studies in the United States and do not return to their home country as they find better living conditions in the north. I was given to understand that the Episcopalians have some university students, but my attempts to meet with Bishop Reginald Gooden were unsuccessful. However, in an exchange of correspondence afterwards, Bishop Gooden manifested his willingness to collaborate with the WSCF.

I did not leave Panama without visiting the beautiful university campus, situated on a slight hill, from which one gets an excellent view of the district. A bronze figure at the entrance symbolically points the way towards the light. Through the generosity of Mr. Fiske I was able to visit one of the most interesting features of the Panama Canal, the Miraflores lock, which with mechanical precision regulates in an almost unbelievably short time the level of the waters. Thirty-four years ago President Wilson, by pressing an electric button in the White House, opened the dams of Gamboa, and thus united the Atlantic with the Pacific Ocean. The narrow stretch of earth of the Canal Zone is, however, a great chunk out of Morazan's dream of the unification of the Central American republics.

### *Costa Rica, November 28-December 3*

On leaving Panama we contemplated from the air a strange panorama with the reflection of the moonlight upon a sea that exhausts all the possible hues of both blue and violet. In a short time we were flying over El Coco, the new international airport of Costa Rica. We were welcomed there by Sr. Claudio Soto Ovares, correspondent of the Federation for that country. The road that took us to the city is bordered by flourishing green farms that are a delight to the eye. Working people cleanly dressed give a sense of well being in their faces. We are in what is called the Switzerland of America. Its people are discreet, law-abiding, sure of themselves, industrious, and proud of their democratic spirit. In this country there are few powerful landlords or feudal magnates to

assume the monopoly of its soil and fruits. To find the great plantations, one must go to the coastal region. In the centre there is a great tableland with a mild climate, the pride of all because it was the cradle of the nation.

Walking round the city I was surprised to find bookshops very well stocked with books from the most important cultural centres of the world. The newspapers, to an extent you do not see in any other of these countries, find room in their pages for national and international news without any impediment to their liberty of expression. It is a country that has witnessed several *coups d'état*, but the last, in 1948, had for its object the respecting of the constitution and a return to legality. Since then the military are but a secondary factor in the nation, and the life of the people is ruled rather by the diligent cultivation of the earth and the remarkable mobilization of the country's educational forces.

Soon after my arrival I contacted the Evangelical groups. With Rev. Juan Sosa I visited the church of El Redentor in one of whose departments a simple plaque announces the activities of a university group, which gets together from time to time in an informal way. During my stay it was not possible to gather them together for a united session, but with the help of Pastor Sosa and Sr. Soto we were able to have a number of personal conversations with individual members. I had the pleasure of attending an inter-denominational assembly of rural workers held in the splendid agricultural and educational centre of the Latin American Mission in Roble Alto. There leaders of the various Evangelical churches working in Costa Rica met together to consider the implications of the gospel for rural life. Their suggestive motto, "The earth is sacred", indicated the orientation of this meeting, which afforded an excellent opportunity for me to get to know the leaders of the different churches. I was also given the opportunity to tell them something of the work of the Federation.

Several hours were spent in visiting the university and the Methodist college. The university is situated in one of the residential districts, and in summer its modern buildings of severe classical lines are peopled with students from all over Latin America who come for special courses. An inter-denominational Christian student group of modest proportions meets regularly not far from the campus. It is our hope that this group will increase in size and importance through the efforts of certain students who were with us at Santa Ana. I should also mention that in the Methodist college there are meetings for Bible study among the secondary students. We held a meeting with a goodly number of students to talk over details

of our conference in Santa Ana, and our invitation was well received and the possibilities of sending a worthy delegation were considered. I was invited to preach in several places, and on one occasion through radio transmission El Faro del Caribe I was able to reach a far larger audience. I much regret that through unforeseen circumstances I was not able to visit other Christian organizations which carry on important work.

Evangelical Christian work seemed on the whole to be well organized and to show signs of steady progress. In spite of certain denominational narrowness, one can see signs of a better understanding and a closer cooperation among them, as was manifested by the rural conference referred to above. The Roman Catholic hierarchy has responded to the Protestant advance on many occasions with extraordinary verbal vehemence. In some shop windows of the main streets of San José a notice may still be seen which reads, "We do not admit Evangelical propaganda — we are Catholics", it being no mystery where this fear originates. We cannot ignore the adverse effect of such an attitude on work among Christian students. Perhaps the greatest difficulty consists in the lack of consecrated leaders in the work and in the lack of conscience as to the meaning of an academic life for the Christian. However, we believe that the time is opportune for a forward movement among the students on a level with the progress of the work among Evangelicals in general.

*(To be continued)*

## SCANDINAVIAN TRAVEL DIARY

### **An account of visits to Schools Movements in Finland, Sweden, and Norway**

FRANK GLENDENNING

#### PART I

My travels this summer began when I left Hull after Evensong at my church on Sunday, August 4, and the travel diary proper that I have tried to compile begins really when I left Zurich airport on August 16.

#### *Student seminar at Mainau*

In the intervening time I had been with T. V. Philip at International Centre Castle Mainau for another of the joint conferences that the Centre has arranged in recent years, with the WSCF. It was a seminar on "Freedom". Members of the seminar came from the United States and from many parts of Western Europe, including students from Eastern Germany. This year's European seminar of the student divisions of the American YMCA and YWCA, under the leadership of Odile Sweeney, accounted for about a third of the Mainau seminar, which numbered nearly sixty people. I enjoyed this seminar more than any of the student courses I have attended at Mainau in recent years, and that is intended as a compliment to this year's course, rather than criticism of previous courses there. The level of discussion was high and informed, and the seminar more than succeeded in providing an international and ecumenical atmosphere in which the main business could be carried on. This was true of Bible study, worship, and general conferencemanship. The whole affair which might have been overbalanced on the English-speaking side demonstrated to me, as few international meetings have, what it means really to live *together*, at this level.

The Centre is most fortunate in having as its first full-time director (that is, the first for nine years), Tore Littmarck of the staff of the World Alliance of YMCAs. Geographically placed as it is on Lake Constance, the Centre is now ideally situated in these marvellous surroundings, to act as a place where the needs of young people can



be met. With a director so well-known in the ecumenical movement, it can perform a task of importance not only for the YMCA but for the Church as a whole, providing an atmosphere of ecumenical and international understanding, intellectual stimulus, and spiritual growth, all of which were present in full measure during the seminar, as the community of work and worship deepened day by day. The seminar will remain in my memory for a long time, and it introduced me to many new friends, including M. G. Dharmaraj of the World Alliance staff, Odile Sweeney of the United States National Student YWCA staff, and Herb and Peggy Muenstermann of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. They enriched our seminar with their wisdom and experience, and T.V. and I left Mainau very happy.

### *On to the main business*

I left Mainau with T.V. on August 16. We were driven by Tore Littmarck at great speed through Northern Switzerland to the village of Kloten where the fine Zurich airport stands. We said goodbye, and T.V. went on with Tore by car to Zurich, en route for the office in Geneva. We were to be reunited in Stockholm on August 23, so the parting wasn't too difficult!

Some travel diaries in the past seem to have been able to include exotic accounts of aerial views, but this was not to be possible on this short and straightforward trip to Copenhagen. We were above the clouds all the way. I stopped off for a night in Copenhagen, for when the trip was first planned I had hoped to meet high school leaders in Copenhagen for a few hours. This turned out not to be possible in the end, so I turned my twenty-four hours in this lovely Northern city into a day of rest and leisure. I paid my fifty öre also to enter the Tivoli Gardens, which I had been unable to visit when I was in Copenhagen in January. I wasn't quite sure what to expect. The whole affair is a mixture of brash, commercialized entertainment and the pleasant quietness of a small park. But apart from the good restaurants, it seemed to me in the daylight at any rate only a slightly more dignified version of the amusement parks and arcades that we have at British coast towns. Perhaps I was wrong, or perhaps I committed a grave theological error in going there anyway!

### *To Finland*

I left Kastrup at 5 p.m. on the 17th for Helsinki, via Stockholm. Copenhagen I had found unbearably hot, and after flying once again above cloud we came down at Stockholm airport where I had to

change planes, only to find that at 7 p.m. it was also extremely hot, uncomfortably so, merely sitting in the lounge. Is there no air conditioning in Scandinavia? It is one thing to be warm in winter, but this seemed to me quite another thing.

I arrived in Helsinki at 11 p.m. that night, and was soon acting on the instructions of the Finnish SCM and going to my hotel. The problem of language immediately confronts the traveller entering this delightful country, and in spite of taxi driver and hotel porter, I managed everything well, by a mixture of English and German words, mime and suitable noises. Just as I was turning into bed at midnight the phone bell rang in my room. I thought twice before answering it, but a tentative use of the international "Ja"? revealed in response the unmistakable voice of Risto Lehtonen, General Secretary of the SCM of Finland, speaking from a student conference at Lohja. He wanted to know if I was safe and sound, and happy. Nothing could have helped to make me feel more at home than this kindly gesture, and it set the tone for my whole visit.

I was up early next morning, taking a train for 250 miles into Eastern Finland, in order to reach Teiniharju, the SCM's camping village near Punkasalmi, at the south-easterly side of the great region of lakes, which make such a fascinating study for the geologist. It was a seven hours' journey, through what superficially seemed to be fairly barren countryside, and through countless forests and past innumerable lakes. At one point of the journey we were able to see the Russian border, and this was pointed out to me in casual tones by my neighbours who were anxious to make me feel at home in their country also, as the miles passed. Russia sometimes comes in for hysterical abuse in the Northern countries, but this, as I was to discover, was the typical Finn attitude of "We really can't quite understand what all the fuss is about", or "We do. But so what?". It was refreshingly sane and typical of these modest and cheerful people. Finland is larger than England, Scotland, and Wales, but its inhabitants number under five million. There are few big cities. Their language is difficult to classify philologically, and their lovely country is not visited by many tourists. This has given them, it seemed to me, a quiet pride in their culture and their traditions, and although like any society they have their problems, of which alcoholism and dancing seemed to loom large for the Christians, there is a dignity and industry about their attitude to life which is impressive.

I was met at Punkasalmi station by Esko Rintala, one of the Schools Secretaries of the Finnish SCM and based at Jyväskylä in central Finland. We went about a mile and a half by car to Teiniharju.

I had heard so much over the years about this lovely camping ground of the SCM, that I was glad not to be disappointed. Set amidst pine and birch trees these wooden cabins stand looking out over the lakes, and provide a delightful and friendly sight to the stranger. The camp I had come to attend was one of the annual study camps for schoolboys and girls who are in the leadership of their branches in the schools. Esko was assisted by Antti Alhonsaari, an SCM Schools Secretary based at Oulu in the north. Both of them were at General Committee, Tutzing, and so we had much to talk over.

There is actually no Schools Movement in Finland, but the SCM's Schools Secretaries operate freely in the schools and nurture the Bible study groups which exist in considerable numbers in schools throughout the country. The plan of this conference was similar to the normal type of SCM study conference, and I was impressed by the seriousness with which these thirty boys and girls had got down to business. They worked hard, and they enjoyed themselves. They were never late for meetings. They took notes copiously, and were always ready to ask searching questions of their speakers, and there was no "dating" !

The conference was based on Bible study and worship, with main theological lectures and extra sessions of a more practical nature. They had come to work and they were made to work, and under the wise, tolerant leadership of Esko and Antti, this was a model of training in leadership. We do not after all have much experience of training boys and girls for leadership in the churches, and this conference showed clearly that it can be done. My presence in the camp created, of course, linguistic problems, as only about half a dozen of the conference members were able to speak with me in English, but Esko and Antti manfully shouldered this problem and insisted on always being at my side so that I should be able to feel, as they put it, "the pulse of the conference". This was a great help, for when I spoke publicly to them about the Atonement, the Church, or the English Reformation I was able to relate what I was saying to the main theme of their common study. The boys and girls were kindness itself and always considerate for my welfare. This was a demonstration of Christian imagination which was heightened for me the more because of the language barrier.

During my stay I underwent many new experiences. Washing in the lake in a rainstorm was one, and eating supper outside every night, wrapped up in an overcoat because of the cold, was another. But these misfortunes for the foreigner were absorbed into the general enjoyment of the camp, and though painful at the time quickly forgotten !



No visitor to Finland can afford to miss the *sauna* bath. What a remarkably healthy operation this is. You sit in a room which gets hotter and hotter as water is poured over hot stones in the stove. When you are streaming with perspiration you go into a cooler room and wash, and then plunge straight into the lake for a swim and feel marvellous, then back to the *sauna*, and so on. This is a great boon to civilization, but the main trouble is that Finland would have to start exporting lakes, if the treatment was to be really one hundred per cent effective.

The *seurat* also is another indigenous activity, and part of the general worshipping life of the Church of Finland. It is quite simply the singing of a number of hymns, interspersed by short sermons from various people. The whole service lasts about an hour and a half — an interesting devotion and one that is very close to the Finnish heart.

The *seurat* in which I took part was an interesting example of the relation between the SCM and the Church in Finland. Members of the parish came to this camp *seurat*, including the local vicar. Later the leaders were invited round to the vicarage for coffee one afternoon. Then the church treasurer came in one night to show some colour slides of the district. And one of the really interesting pieces of work that the SCM does for the Church of Finland is to arrange confirmation camps, in which boys and girls are prepared for confirmation, after a very tight schedule of lectures and discussions with an examination at the end of the course. These are not only important teaching conferences, but full of pastoral opportunity also. Some participants come to a confirmation camp merely because to be confirmed is a mark of entering responsible adulthood. There is an increasing volume of contribution from the parishes to the work of the SCM, and the SCM staff's work in really establishing the Finnish SCM as "part of the life of the Church" is a remarkable achievement, even though ninety-five per cent of the population would claim to be Lutheran.

The last day that I was at Teiniharju I heard from Frances that our house had been broken into while she had been away. Apart from the mess that the burglar had made, the major loss ironically enough was a WSCF collecting box which we keep in our guest room!

That afternoon the vicar very kindly took the three of us in his car to see Punkaharju, one of the most lovely spots in the country. Here I was able to marvel even more at the extraordinary behaviour of that glacier, thousands of years ago — the great glacier which moved south-east from Sweden to Finland leaving this extraordinary network of lakes, and ridges between them, which have to be seen



to be believed. Sometimes these ridges are only a few feet high and as wide as the road. The Finns have learned to use them to advantage.

On the evening of the 22nd I left for Helsinki, after a stimulating and enjoyable few days. And on the 23rd I enjoyed a lazy morning before meeting Risto Lehtonen, with whom I spent the rest of the day, either at his flat with his delightful family or at the SCM office at Meritullinkatu. We had promised ourselves this meeting so that we could talk in detail about the work of the SCM and the SCM in Schools in Finland and look at it from the General Secretary's angle. This I found very interesting indeed and was very grateful for the time and energy that Risto put into the day. He was patience and helpfulness personified, and I appreciated it the more when I realized that he had returned only that morning from Lohja and would be away from his family again within twenty-four hours to another conference.

The day was also a happy choice because it meant that I could meet also Gillian Northfield of the British SCM in Schools headquarters staff and Christoph Rhein of the German SCM staff who had been several weeks in Finland attending camps and conferences with Risto. They were both in extremely good form and we all agreed that it was as good as a *sauna* to meet again. This seemed to us foreigners the best Finnish compliment that we could pay to one another.

*(To be continued)*



